

STARS AND STRIPES®

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56 percent of NFL
players obese**
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plus events listings**
Travel magazine inside

Volume 63, No. 318 © SS 2005 G

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2005

50¢

COLA pay goes down as dollar strengthens

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The new Army Europe

EUCOM commander Marine
Gen. James Jones lays out the
likely posture of the U.S. Army,
post-transformation

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Consolidated USAREUR-
V Corps Headquarters
- 2 **Ramstein/Kaiserslautern/
Landstuhl/Baumholder**
Logistics hub for U.S. forces in Europe
- 3 **Illesheim/Ansbach:**
Multifunction Aviation Brigade
- 4 **Grafenwöhr/Hohenfels/Vilseck:**
Grafenwöhr: Combat Enabler Brigade
Vilseck: Stryker Brigade



Italy

- 5 **Vicenza/Aviano/
Dal Molin:**
Airborne infantry
battalion with
support units
under SETAF

MORGAN LOOSLE/Stars and Stripes

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SOON

Scene on Sunday

10 things to try
while in England

Scene on Sunday

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finds fame on 'Lost'Don't miss a
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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Glare of L.A.'s Disney Hall: Parts of the mirror-like walls of the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles will undergo a \$90,000 facelift to give them a little less luster.

County supervisors approved a plan Tuesday to dull a convex section of the concert hall's polished silver siding that reflects sunlight. The glare produces extra heat that overwhelms the air conditioning of residents at the nearby Promenade Towers.

Bush assassination plot: A man accused of plotting to assassinate President Bush admitted many times that he joined al-Qaida and pondered hijackings similar to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, an FBI agent testified.

Agent Barry Cole's testimony Tuesday came at a pretrial hearing in Alexandria, Va., for Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, 23. A federal magistrate said Abu Ali posed a "grave danger" and ordered that he remain jailed pending trial.

Professor under fire: A University of Colorado professor defended his essay that compared some people who died in the World Trade Center attack to Nazi war criminals, saying he was writing in an attempt to understand the terrorists' motivation.

Ward Churchill said he wrote the essay the afternoon of Sept. 11, 2001, after television networks "spun" the attacks that morning as senseless and after government officials labeled the attackers as evil freedom-haters.

Nowhere in his essay did he advocate the attacks or say they were justified, Churchill told a crowd of about 300

people Tuesday at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Lackawanna Six trial: Over repeated objections from the defense, a 28-year-old recruit described his life as an al-Qaida recruit as prosecutors presented the most extensive evidence to date linking a Yemeni suspect to the international terrorist group.

Yahya Goba, a member of the Lackawanna Six terrorist cell, took the stand Tuesday in New York after the judge in the case allowed jurors to see an al-Qaida training camp entry form listing Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad as the sponsor of a trainee, a Yemeni fighter known as Abu Jihad.

Al-Moayad, a prominent Yemeni politician and Islamic cleric, is on trial in federal court in Brooklyn on charges of supporting al-Qaida and the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Movie bootlegger dies in jail: A man awaiting sentencing in Los Angeles for illegally copying and distributing movies being screened for Oscar picks was found dead in his jail cell, authorities said.

Russell Sprague, 32, of Illinois, may have died of a heart attack, the U.S. Marshals Service said. His body was discovered Monday morning and an autopsy was scheduled for Tuesday.

Sprague was scheduled to be sentenced March 21 after pleading guilty last year to one count of copyright infringement. He had faced up to three years in prison.

Correction

A story in Wednesday's editions about two members of the Combat Equipment Battalion-Hythe from RAF Hythe, England, deployed to Afghanistan gave the wrong rank for Chief Warrant Officer 3 Cassandra Young.



Activist injured in Israel: American activist Brian Avery, from Chapel Hill, N.C., speaks to reporters Monday prior to a hearing in his case at Israel's Supreme Court in Jerusalem. The court instructed the military to take testimony in his case. Avery said he and a colleague were standing still, wearing bright red medic vests with their hands over their heads, when soldiers in approaching military vehicles opened fire with no warning shots. Avery, 26, has asked the court to order a criminal investigation and put the soldiers on trial.

World

Beef sanctions: Japan hopes the United States will not impose economic sanctions over Tokyo's 15-month ban on American beef and will continue negotiations, the government's top spokesman said Wednesday.

Some members of the U.S. Congress have warned of possible sanctions if Japan does not lift the ban soon.

The ban was imposed in December 2003 after the United States discovered its first case of fatal brain-wasting mad cow disease, formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Nepal government: Nepal's pro-monarchy government on Wednesday banned any independent reporting on the country's communist insurgency, saying journalists must get all of their information on security issues from the army or police.

The government said in a statement Wednesday that it will not tolerate any published or broadcast reports that could encourage the rebels or promote terrorism or other destructive activities, and anyone issuing such reports faces punishment.

Pope's health: Even if he couldn't speak, Pope John Paul II would bring a powerful spiritual presence to Germany if he makes his only scheduled foreign trip of the year, for a World Youth Day gathering this summer, Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne said Wednesday.

John Paul skipped his popular weekly audience with the faithful Wednesday while concentrating on regaining his health to speak and continuing to work on church matters from his hospital suite in Rome.

Nuclear talks with North Korea: China's deputy foreign minister met with officials in South Korea on Wednesday as the two nations stepped up efforts to get North Korea back to the table for nuclear disarmament talks.

Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Wu

Dawei, who arrived in Seoul on Wednesday, met Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon.

Burundi constitution: Burundians voted overwhelmingly to adopt a new power-sharing constitution, guaranteeing majority rule and minority rights in this Central Africa country torn by 11 years of ethnic violence, officials said Tuesday.

Paul Ngarumbe, the head of the electoral commission, said 90 percent of registered voters turned out Monday and more than 91 percent of them approved the new constitution, which reserves 60 percent of seats in government and parliament for Hutus and 40 percent for Tutsis.

Peacekeeping in East Timor: The United States said Monday it opposes Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recommendation for a one-year extension of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in East Timor, saying there is no longer a threat to peace between the tiny country and its powerful neighbor Indonesia.

The people of East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia in 1999, unleashing a wave of killing, looting and burning by the Indonesian military and its proxy militias that displaced 300,000 people.

For 2½ years, the United Nations administered the territory, then handed it to the Timorese in May 2002. A U.N. mission has remained.

Business

Ebbers trial: The defense rested its case Wednesday at the New York trial of former WorldCom chief Bernard Ebbers after two days in which Ebbers took the witness stand and denied any role in the \$11 billion accounting fraud.

Defense lawyers called four witnesses over five days of testimony, none more important than the 63-year-old ex-CEO, who testified he only learned about the massive fraud after he resigned from WorldCom in April 2002.

Stories and photos from the Associated Press

Horoscopes, advice and comics
every day in Stars and Stripes

With dollar gaining on euro, COLA drops

Despite upward trend in January, analysts expect recovery is temporary

BY JESSICA INIGO
Stars and Stripes

DARMSTADT, Germany — Servicemembers' cost of living allowance dropped 16 percent in February because of the dollar's recent gain against the euro.

Exchange rates show that the dollar has been gradually improving since the beginning of the New Year.

On Wednesday, \$1 bought 0.762721 euro cents, according to live online market rates. The 12-country euro bought \$1.3105 in Wednesday morning European trading, its lowest level for more than a week and down from \$1.3183 in New York late Tuesday, according to an article on Fox.com.

The decrease in COLA is the first after boosts in November and December. The euro soared from costing about \$1.20 in September to an all-time high of \$1.3667 at the end of December.

Military finance officials were

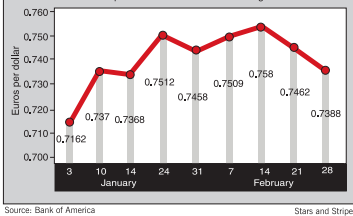
not available for comment Wednesday. However, the 266th Finance Command issued a statement Tuesday explaining that the Department of Defense Per Diem Committee, which handles COLA rates, decided to drop the rates in February.

The Per Diem Committee generally adjusts COLA whenever there is a cumulative upward or downward movement of 5 percent or more in a currency exchange rate. COLA can change frequently during periods of wide exchange rate fluctuations. More typically, many weeks might pass before exchange rates have moved sufficiently to affect COLA.

Bloomberg reported that the dollar rose the most in three weeks against the euro on speculation that Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan would signal higher U.S. interest rates and after a European Union report showed stagnant euro-region growth.

Dollar's gain lowers COLA

The change in the dollar to euro exchange rate over the past two months has resulted in a drop in servicemembers' cost of living allowance



Source: Bank of America

Stars and Stripes

According to the 266th Finance Command Web site, the official average exchange rate for January was 0.7604 for \$1 and 0.7670 for \$1 in February.

On Wednesday, the exchange

rate at Community Bank, which services overseas military communities, was .7412 for \$1, according to the bank's telephone recording. Off-post at the German Commandant's Office in Darmstadt, \$1

bought 78 euro cents Wednesday. Community bank officials were unavailable for comment Wednesday.

"If this trend continues, servicemembers can expect an increase in their COLA when the downward movement in the exchange rate reaches the 5 percent threshold," read a statement issued by the 244th Finance Command.

Forbes said the euro strength late last year was powered by concerns over the U.S. budget and trade deficits.

The dollar has since regained some ground, but Forbes reported that those worries remain and analysts think the recovery could be temporary.

COLA is intended to partially compensate troops stationed overseas as the cost of obtaining goods and services locally exceeds the cost of obtaining similar goods and services stateside.

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Jones details EUROM consolidation proposal

Plan would group all special ops at outpost south of Alps; Army to be split among 5 hubs

BY JON R. ANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — U.S. military officials are in negotiations with host nations to consolidate Army, Navy and Air Force special operations units now spread throughout Europe to a consolidated outpost either in Spain or Sicily, according to the top commander of military forces in Europe.

Any plan would go to Congress for funding.

In an exclusive interview with Stars and Stripes, Marine Gen. James Jones, the chief of U.S. European Command, said the proposal is part of his sweeping reorganization of forces in Europe that will return thousands of troops back to the United States and consolidate remaining units into a small group of new basing hubs.

Jones hopes to reorganize forces to tackle emerging threats in the Middle East, the Caucasus and much of Africa.

The Army will see the most changes, with 239 installations spread across 16 major communities mostly in Germany whittled down to a few dozen installations at five main hubs — four in Germany and one in Italy.

Jones said these five hubs would include the Grafenwöhr training area including Wiesbaden, Hohenfels-Vilseck; posts near Ramstein Air Base, including Kaiserslautern and Baumholder; a new consolidated aviation brigade hub in the Ansbach-Illesheim area; and Army facilities around Aviano Air Base, Italy, including an expanded Del Molino air field to make room a third airborne infantry battalion and new support units under the Southern European Task Force.

Congress is getting the bill for the initial stages of Jones' plan now, including more than \$1 billion earmarked for next year for improvements to "enduring" facilities in Europe.

"There's sticker shock here. It's very expensive," Jones told Stars and Stripes. Although he could not immediately put a price tag on the effort, he added, "It's a big bill. It's a huge bill."

Also, the upcoming Base Realignment and Closure process in the United States will play a key role in Europe's plans, said Jones, especially in determining where units will relocate as they leave.

Meanwhile, he said, "tweaking continues" on the overall plan.

Tucked inside Jones' prepared testimony before Congress this week are a slew of new details on what that plan includes. Among them:

■ **Special Operations** — Currently the Army's 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group is based in Germany, the Navy's SEAL teams split are between Spain and Germany and the Air Force's 325th Special Operations Group based in England. Jones said he hopes to consolidate the units onto one base. The two best candidates, he said, are existing Navy bases in either Rota, Spain, or Sigonella, Sicily. "We are looking for a position south of the Alps to better place our center of mass for special operations," Jones told Stars and Stripes.

■ **Aviation Brigade** — A "Multifunction Aviation Brigade" will be created in the Ansbach/Illesheim area. It will include two Apache battalions, plus lift and aviation support units.

■ **Enabler Brigade** — A new "combat enabler" brigade will be created at Grafenwöhr, where new barracks and fam-



GEOFFREY CARTER/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division Rear Operations Center undergo convoy live fire training at Grafenwöhr, Germany, as part of their pre-deployment training. A new brigade may be stationed at Grafenwöhr as part of the Army's transformation efforts.

ily housing units are now being built. The brigade will include artillery, engineer, MPs, signal and logistics units.

■ **Stryker Brigade** — One of the new all-wheeled Stryker brigades will go to Vilseck, adjacent to Grafenwöhr, expected sometime around 2007.

■ **Eastern European Task Force** — The new Army headquarters will be based in Eastern Europe, with brigade-sized rotational units from Europe and the United States going to new base-homes "forward operating sites" in Romania and Bulgaria. One of the Stryker brigade's battalions will be the first to rotate to Eastern Europe shortly after it arrives in Grafenwöhr.

■ **Black Sea pre-position site** — Jones told Stars and Stripes he hopes to establish an additional brigade-sized storehouse of gear and equipment on the Black Sea to augment existing sites in Italy and Norway, as well as

beef up his flotilla of sea-based gear. "As we get out of the heavy divisions, we don't want to get out of the heavy equipment so that we can rapidly transition to a bigger force if we need it," said Jones.

■ **Re-basing schedule** — Plans call for 1st Infantry Division to return to the United States first, beginning in the summer of 2006, said Jones, followed by 1st Armored Division after it gets back from its upcoming deployment to Iraq. The merger of V Corps and USAREUR at Wiesbaden will be the last major movement. Jones emphasized, however, that the time line is subject to change as the war in Iraq, the BRAC process and competing funding priorities all play out.

"The plan is on the table," Jones. "There are a lot of eager people out there waiting to do things, but we need decisions and we need resources."

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Gricignano dog policy remains undecided

BY JASON CHUDY

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — It didn't take long for the most recent Naval Support Activity Naples community meeting to go to the dogs.

In fact, it started and ended with dogs, as the meeting was specifically set up for people to air their opinions about the possibility of allowing man's best friend to live in the Gricignano Support Site housing area.

The base commander, Capt. Dave Frederick, said he hadn't decided whether to allow them on the support site, but is leaning toward keeping the no-dog policy in place.

He referred to a recent housing survey in which 60 percent of residents were against allowing dogs and about 40 percent were for it.

"I am in favor of holding the policy as it is," he told about 150 on- and off-base residents attending the nearly two-hour meeting.

About two dozen people spoke during the meeting, with about half for and half against having dogs on Gricignano.

Those in favor said the animals helped relieve stress and should be valued as an "American" tradition of dog ownership. Most said they felt that their dogs are family members, not just pets.

Amber Hansen, who with her husband owns an English bulldog, recommended size



JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

Air Force Capt. James Struckmeyer, commander of Detachment 2, European Mission Support Squadron, speaks at a recent NSA Naples community meeting on why he believes dogs should be allowed on the support site housing area. To his left are others waiting to speak on why they are for or against dogs in housing.

or weight limits for pets if they're allowed on base or, at minimum, the creation of an on-base dog run for those wanting somewhere to take their pets.

Many dog owners who live in either government-leased apartments or elsewhere on the economy said they didn't have a safe area to walk their dogs, citing bad drivers, an

abundance of trash and stray or feral dogs as hazards to both their pets and themselves.

Dogs are allowed at the Carney Park recreation facility, but it's about a 45-minute drive from the support site.

Most who opposed allowing dogs in base housing said they were actually dog lovers.

Lt. j.g. Richard Wales left his dog with

family in the United States before moving to Italy because he knew the support site housing didn't allow them.

"We do not like the fact of not having our dog," he said. "But ... we had to give up some freedom [to live on the support site] and that freedom was giving up my dog."

Others said dogs should be banned because some owners are irresponsible, don't clean up pet waste, and let the dogs bark. Pet enforcement issues would be a problem, Frederick said, because since Sept. 11, 2001, Navy security forces are no longer assigned to police on-base communities. However, security forces members have caught some infractions.

The base security officer, Lt. Cmdr. Perry Suter, said people already aren't following the existing dog regulation allowing the animals to be brought only to and from the base veterinarian clinic.

He said security has logged more than 35 incidents since the clinic opened last July where people have taken their dogs to other places on base.

Base veterinarian Dr. (Army Capt.) Jacques Parker also opposed dogs living in support site apartments.

Frederick didn't give a date on when a final decision will be made, but said he would be briefing the Navy Region Europe commander, Rear Adm. Stanley Bozin, on the issue in the next few days.

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MARGOT CORNELIUS/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Fifth-grade pupils at the Schweinfurt Elementary School in Germany take time out during class to read their favorite book on Read Across America day. Pupils at the school marked the day, which coincides with the birthday of Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss.



In Italy, Naples Elementary School guidance counselor Stephanie Laird reads Dr. Seuss' 'Green Eggs and Ham' to first-graders during the National Education Association's Read Across America day on Wednesday.

JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

Students in Europe get serving of green eggs and ham

BY JASON CHUDY
AND RICK EMERT

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Don't try to tell Bridgett Walter that Dr. Seuss isn't one of the most important authors of all time.

"He taught people to read," said the 7-year-old Naples Elementary School first-grader.

"So Dr. Seuss was one of the best people in my life. He's like the most best person who wrote any books!"

Bridgett wasn't alone Wednesday in her praise of Dr. Seuss, as kids at Department of Defense Dependents Schools throughout Europe celebrated Theodore Seuss Geisel on what would have

DODDS mark Dr. Seuss' birthday with Read Across America

been his 101st birthday as part of the National Education Association's Read Across America day.

The program, which is in its eighth year, is designed to illustrate the importance of reading through Dr. Seuss' books. This year, organizers hoped to "bring the nation together under one hat," that hat being the red-and-white stovepipe hat made famous by Dr. Seuss' Cat in the Hat.

In Naples, pupils were able to make their own hats, and some even celebrated by preparing green eggs and ham. Then there were lots of readings from the books of the good "doctor."

In Sharon Scott's first-grade class, the 19 children broke up into three small groups to listen to — and even read along with — Dr. Seuss selections.

"It's gotten big this year," said Naples Elementary guidance counselor Stephanie Laird, who was dressed as the Cat in the Hat.

"I think it's just going to get bigger and bigger."

And if the events around Europe were any indication, Laird is probably right.

In Germany, officials at Bamberg Elementary School wanted to get some of the more than

1,000 soldiers recently returning to the area from Iraq involved in Read Across America.

So principal Sandy Kupinski challenged the pupils to "recruit" at least 40 soldiers.

The pupils met the challenge, with 41 soldiers signing in by 10 a.m. and more expected to participate throughout the day. About 80 soldiers and parents volunteered to read to pupils or have the children read to them.

Others joined their children — many sporting the familiar hats — during an assembly that filled the school's multipurpose room. "Considering all the deploy-

ments and the soldiers coming home, I was really amazed to how many participated," said Sally Friedrich, a teacher and one of the organizer of the day's events in Bamberg.

One of the soldiers attending was Sgt. Rocky Bounds from Battery B, 1st Battalion 6th Field Artillery Regiment. His daughter, Alexis, had been talking to him about the event for days.

"I loved it," Bounds said of the morning assembly.

"It really motivated the kids. I think the kids get a lot of seeing soldiers come in to show them that reading is important."

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Staff sergeant who beat his pregnant wife pleads guilty

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — An Air Force policeman who beat his pregnant wife in the face and kicked her in the abdomen was reduced in rank by one grade and forfeited \$1,000 of pay for one month after pleading guilty during a summary court-martial last week at RAF Mildenhall.

Staff Sgt. Courtney Robinson, 30, of the 100th Security Forces Squadron, was charged with assault consummated by battery, said Capt. Anthony Sprately, the assistant staff judge advocate.

"He hit his wife in the face multiple times. He struck her with his hand," Sprately said.

Robinson also kicked her in the abdomen. At the time, she was more than eight months pregnant. Sprately said the baby was unharmed, but the wife suffered bruises on her face and abdomen from the attack, which took place at their home Dec. 3, 2004.

Sprately said a summary court-martial is used for crimes considered less severe than those sent to special or general courts-martial.

Robinson's case was heard not by a judge, but by a line officer chosen by the wing commander, in this case a lieutenant colonel.

The summary court-martial prevents a person of Robinson's rank from being confined or reduced by more than one rank. Limits are also put on the amount of pay that can be forfeited.

In a second summary court-martial, held the same day and heard by the same officer, another 100th Security Forces Squadron member admitted using marijuana and trying to cover up a random urinalysis test.

Senior Airman Montrell Cannon, 24, was reduced in rank to airman basic. His unit plans unspecified administrative action, as well, Sprately said.

Cannon admitted using bleach to cover up a random urinalysis test. When he was confronted, he submitted to a second test, which showed positive for marijuana.

He was charged with dereliction of duty for faking the initial test.

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DOD to add 2,300 special forces troops, general says

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will add about 2,300 new special operations forces to its rolls over the next four years, including two Navy SEAL team equivalents and about 300 Green Berets, the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command told Congress this week.



Brown

Gen. Bryan D. Brown said the extra personnel are needed to keep up with the current demand on the elite teams, both for small-scale individual missions and as support for larger, multiforce operations.

"The old paradigm was any place, anytime," Brown said. "Today, we are focused on key areas that have an impact on the global war on terror."

About 1,400 of those new troops will be ready by October 2006, Brown said. Recruitment and training for the posts usually take 12 to 24 months.

For the last year, about 6,100 special operations personnel have been deployed worldwide, the highest sustained level of activity ever, Brown said.

About 20 percent of that number are reservists, mostly serving as civil affairs and psychological operations officers.

While other military specialties are facing recruiting and retention shortfalls, Brown said he has not seen similar problems so far. All special operations personnel are eligible for education benefits, and they are targeted bonuses have also kept applicants interested.

But he did admit that the global demand on the special forces "has stretched the ability to train at the level we would like to."

The defense budget under consideration before Congress does include additional money for training and support services for the special operations teams. Brown said those plans must go forward to ensure future personnel meet the same standards as existing troops.

New focus on drugs

Gen. John P. Abizaid, commander of U.S. Central Command, told members of the House Armed Services Committee that military forces in Afghanistan need to focus on counter-narcotics work as well as counter-terrorist efforts for that country's new government to succeed.

"There's no doubt we have to be concerned about poppy cultivation and the drug trade," he said. "Counter-drug needs to be up on the overall strategy list."

He added that he expects the process of removing the lucrative, illegal drug sales from the Afghan economy to be a long and difficult process.

"What we don't want to do is adopt a program that will send the country back into insolvency," he said. "We have to have a smart, well-organized strategy that doesn't penalize the poor farmer who doesn't have any other choices."

However, Abizaid noted that U.S. forces cannot simply decide to take the lead in ending Afghanistan's drug trade.

Abizaid

Currently British authorities in Afghanistan are charged with monitoring and pursuing international narcotics issues within Afghanistan, and U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officials oversee all American anti-drug efforts around the world.

Special Forces troops deployed as part of Operation Enduring Freedom have conducted some reconnaissance and narcotics seizure over the last several years, Brown said.

Abizaid said Afghan officials have begun addressing the problem with new counter-narcotics teams and a special panel to investigate the issue.

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2001 / Ford Focus	LT Auto AC Power Windows Leather CD Alloy	\$9,900
2001 / Nissan Altima	Auto AC Power Windows LOW MILES	\$11,900
2001 / Hyundai Tiburon	AC Power Windows Leather CD Alloy	\$11,900
2000 / Chevrolet Cavalier	Auto AC Power 5 Speed Power Windows Low Miles	\$9,900
2000 / Hyundai	Auto AC Ext Cab Power W/L.M.	\$9,900
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Guardsmen end Bosnia peacekeeping deployment



IVANA AVRAMOVIC/Courtesy of U.S. Army

The last Indiana National Guard soldiers leave Eagle Base, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on Wednesday after a year-long peacekeeping deployment. The majority of the 800 guardsmen from the 38th Infantry Division who arrived in Bosnia in March 2004 for the final Stabilization Force peacekeeping deployment left in December, when the SFOR mission ended. About 150 troops stayed behind to serve as part of NATO's Enduring Mission and help with the transition to the European Union force. About 200 soldiers from the California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division replaced the Indiana troops and are working with the NATO mission.

Missile launcher installed in D.C. suburb drawing stares

By MARY OTTO

The Washington Post

A large, drab green missile launcher — aimed vigilantly skyward — has become one of the more distinctive landmarks in the Washington suburb of West Bethesda, Md.

"Did you see that?" neighborhood resident Miriam Burton asked her husband, Alton, when she first spotted the weapon on a recent drive along the Clara Barton Parkway. "What the heck is going on there?"

The launcher claims a commanding position on the lawn at the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center's Carderock facility, a science and engineering center overlooking the Potomac River. The missile launcher, erected in December, has people talking, but the U.S. Navy is keeping mum about its specific capabilities.

"People have to understand there are a lot of moving parts to our national defense, and not everyone is going to know about all of them," says Lt. Cmdr. Ed Zeigler, public affairs officer for the Naval District of Washington.

He did say that the launcher is part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command's Operation Noble Eagle, a program designed to tighten national security since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. He says the six non-nuclear missiles in the launcher could "counter an inbound threat."

Opinions about the neighborhood's newest security system have varied.

Larry Hubbard is among those in the upscale community who have barely given the launcher a second thought. But others, such as Lenore Schneiderman, wonder about it.

"I don't like the idea of that thing over there," she says, quickly adding: "At least it's not facing my house."

Golf tourney at Lakenheath to benefit charity

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — Forest Heath District Council and the 48th Fighter Wing's British-American Committee are organizing a golf tournament for charity at RAF Lakenheath on Friday.

The Texas Scramble tournament and charity auction will raise money for two local schools — Newmarket Upper School and Mildenhall College of Technology.

About 150 members of the community and the wing will take part, according to information from the 48th Fighter Wing public affairs office. Places in the tournament have been filled.

Brig. Gen. Mark Matthews, wing commander, and Carol Lynch, head of Forest Heath District Council, will present trophies to winners.

USAFE pool players to square off in competition

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — The best pool players in U.S. Air Forces in Europe will be at RAF Lakenheath next week for the USAFE Pool Shark Tournament.

More than 40 players from across the command will play Eight Ball to determine the winner of the \$400 first prize for the top team. The elimination rounds will begin at 9 a.m. March 10 with the final matches starting at 9 a.m. March 11. The tournament will be held at the 48th Air Force lounge and community center.

From staff reports

Italian soldiers start arriving in Afghanistan

NATO troops to replace U.S. forces

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Italian soldiers have begun arriving in western Afghanistan under plans for NATO troops to gradually replace U.S. forces across the country, an alliance commander said Wednesday.

Italy is taking over a base in the main western city of Herat from the United States. Spain and Lithuania are to set up new bases in adjoining Badghis and Ghor provinces, while an existing U.S. outpost in Farah also will come under NATO control.

An advance party of Italian soldiers has "already started coming in," said Lt. Gen. Ethem Erdagi, the Turkish commander of the International Security Assistance Force which has supported Afghanistan's feeble government since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

NATO officials said several dozen Italians were in Herat, and

Erdagi said the takeover of the region should be complete by June.

The international force, currently under NATO command, expanded across northern Afghanistan from the capital, Kabul, the first stage in a plan to supplant the U.S.-dominated combat force across the country.

NATO planners are working on how they might take over the south of the country, where militants continue to attack Afghan and U.S. troops, and eventually the east, too. But it remains unclear whether NATO troops will maintain the aggressive operations of American forces. The expansion into the west will bring hundreds of extra troops into the currently 9,000-strong force.

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Saddam tribunal judge, lawyer fatally shot

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Tuesday, March 1, 2005, at least 1,499 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,139 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department.

The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is nine higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,361 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,030 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A U.S. soldier died Tuesday from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident near Baiji, Iraq.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army 2nd Lt. Richard B. Gienau, 29, Longview, Iowa; died Sunday in Ramadi, Iraq, from injuries sustained when an explosive hit his vehicle, assigned to the National Guard's 224th Engineer Battalion, Burlington, Iowa.

■ Army Pfc. Min S. Choi, 21, River Vale, N.J.; died Saturday in Atherba, Iraq, when an explosive detonated near his patrol; assigned to the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

■ Army Pvt. Landon S. Giles, 19, Indiana, Pa.; died Saturday in Atherba, Iraq, when an explosive detonated near his patrol; assigned to the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

■ Army Pfc. Chassan S. Henry, 20, West Palm Beach, Fla.; died Friday in Ramadi, Iraq, from injuries sustained in an explosion; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Hovey, Korea.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Alexander B. Crackel, 31, Wilstead Bedford, United Kingdom; died Thursday in Iraq's Anbar province, from small arms fire; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, Camp Hovey, Korea.

■ Army Spc. Michael S. Deem, 35, Rockledge, Fla.; died Thursday in Baghdad, Iraq, from non-combat related injuries; assigned to the Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

Car bombs kill 12 Iraqi troops

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Gunmen killed a judge and lawyer working for the tribunal that will try Saddam Hussein and members of his former regime, a day after the secret court referred five of the ousted dictator's aides to trial for alleged crimes against humanity, officials and a relative of the slain men said Wednesday.

While a tribunal official indicated the shootings may have been due to a personal dispute, one of the judge's surviving sons disagreed. He said the two were assassinated either because they worked for the court, or because they were minority Kurds.

News of the deaths came as two car bombs exploded in the capital, killing 12 Iraqi soldiers and wounding dozens of others, an Interior Ministry official said. The first blast targeted an Iraqi army base in central Baghdad, killing eight troops and wounding at least 25. A second car bomb an hour later at an army checkpoint in south Baghdad killed four soldiers.

National Security Adviser Mouwafak al-Rubaie vowed the government would hunt down those responsible. Another blast Monday in Hillah, south of Baghdad, killed 125 people — the deadliest single car bombing since Saddam was toppled in 2003.

Meanwhile, the insurgent



Two boys catch the spray as a man hoses down a burning car in Ramadi, an insurgent stronghold 70 miles west of Baghdad, on Wednesday. Clashes erupted between U.S. forces and gunmen after insurgents detonated a roadside bomb as a U.S. convoy passed. The explosion missed the convoy, but damaged two civilian cars.

Ansar al-Sunnah Army purportedly posted an Internet statement Wednesday claiming to have killed two Turkish drivers they snatched Feb. 25. It was not possible to verify the statement's authenticity.

The two slain men in Baghdad were judge Barwez Mohammed Mahmoud al-Merwani and his son, lawyer Aryan Barwez al-Merwani, according to one of the judge's sons, Kikaw Barwez Mohammed al-Merwani. The shootings in northern Baghdad's Azamiyah district on Tuesday marked the first time any legal staff working for the Iraqi Special Tribunal have been killed.

A day before the killings, the tribunal had issued referrals for five former regime members — including one of Saddam's half brothers — for crimes against humanity.

In Ramadi, west of Baghdad,

clashes erupted between U.S. forces and gunmen after insurgents detonated roadside bomb as a U.S. convoy passed. The explosion missed the convoy, but damaged two civilian cars that were in flames.

U.S. forces "detained one suspected terrorist, killed two and injured another during operations in northern Iraq" on Wednesday, the military said in a statement from Mosul.

In a statement posted on the Internet, al-Qaida in Iraq purportedly claimed responsibility for the Muthanna airport attack, saying it was a "martyrdom" operation. The authenticity of the statement could not be verified.

About an hour later, another car bomb exploded in southern Baghdad's Doura neighborhood, killing four Iraqi soldiers at an army checkpoint and wounding three others, police said on condition of anonymity.



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IN THE STATES

High court tackles Commandments debate

BY HOPE YEN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ten Commandments displays should be allowed on government property because they pay tribute to America's religious and legal history, the Supreme Court was told Wednesday, in cases that could render a new definition of the role that religion plays in the life of the nation.

"The idea of having a fence around the Ten Commandments to make clear the state has nothing to do with it, I think that is bending it too far," said acting Solicitor General Paul Clement, in arguing against a strict First Amendment wall between church and state.

David Friedman, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union who is challenging courthouse displays in Kentucky countered. "An assertion that the Ten Commandments is THE source, THE foundation of our legal system ... that is simply wrapping the Ten Commandments in the flag that's endorsement."

In their comments and questions from the bench, justices were reluctant to adopt a blanket ban on such displays. They struggled to formulate a constitutional rule that could determine the fate of thousands of religious



The Rev. Ken Johnson, center, from Seaman, Ohio, and Rev. Rob Schenck, right, president of Faith and Action join other members of clergy from numerous Christian faiths in prayers services for the Ten Commandments in front of the Supreme Court on Tuesday in Washington.

symbols on public property around the country, including one in their own courtroom featuring Moses holding the sacred tablets.

Justice Antonin Scalia noted that legislative proclamations and prayer invoking God's name

are permissible. "I don't see why the one is good and the other is bad," he said.

In the high court's first confrontation with the Ten Commandments issue in a quarter-century, a case from Texas also was being argued.

Erwin Chemerinsky, a lawyer representing a man who seeks its removal, told the justices the display is a "religious symbol."

The prominence of the display on the capitol grounds and the fact that so many of commandments deal with God "does pro-

note religion," he maintained.

Monuments carrying the Ten Commandments are common in town squares, courthouses and other government-owned land around the country. Lawyers challenging these displays argue that they violate the First Amendment ban on any law "respecting an establishment of religion," or simply represent a secular tribute to America's legal heritage.

The question has sparked dozens of heated legal battles, including one in Alabama by Roy Moore. He lost his job as chief justice a year ago after defying a federal order to remove a 5,300-pound Ten Commandments monument he had installed in the state courthouse.

More than 50 groups have filed "friend-of-the-court" briefs weighing in on the issue.

About two dozen demonstrators gathered in front of the Supreme Court in the icy cold for rallies following a candlelight vigil by supporters of the displays.

"I don't think government should be in the business of morality," said David Condo, 40, of Beltsville, Md., as protesters wrapped in parkas, scarves and ear muffs marched nearby.

Blake trial arguments

LOS ANGELES — In his old days on "Baretta," actor Robert Blake played the good guy. On Wednesday, a prosecutor was ready to tell a jury in closing arguments that Blake crossed the line and became a killer.

Blake, 71, is accused of murdering his wife, Bonnie Lee Blakey, less than six months after their marriage. Prosecutors have tried to prove that Blake shot her outside a Studio City restaurant after failing to persuade two former stuntmen to do the job.

After closing arguments, the jury could get the case on Friday. It is convicted of murder, two counts of solicitation of murder and a special circumstance of lying in wait, Blake could be sentenced to life in prison.

Funds for ID theft fight

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Law enforcement officials attending the state's first summit on identity theft asked Tuesday for more money to combat the crime in California, the only state believed to have more than 1 million victims last year.

Legislators sought assistance from politicians, businesses and consumer advocates in their quest to prevent identity theft and crack down on thieves.

Sherry Leggett, a postal worker and consumer watchdog, wants to increase funding for prosecutors and for five state task forces dedicated to identity theft. Current funding is about \$12.4 million per year.

From The Associated Press

Tenn. school bus driver killed; student in custody

The Associated Press

CUMBERLAND CITY, Tenn. — A school bus driver was shot to death as she drove her route Wednesday morning and a male student was taken into custody, authorities said. No students were hurt.

Law enforcement source who spoke on condition of anonymity told The Associated Press that the bus driver died.

At the time of the shooting, the bus was carrying up to 20 schoolchildren of all

ages, said Bill Austin, a supervisor for Stewart County schools.

The student taken into custody was identified only as a teenager.

The bus crashed into a utility pole at the driveway of the student's home and knocked out power in the rural neighborhood.

Stewart County school superintendent Philip Wallace declined to identify the driver but said she had worked for the schools for two years.

Prosecution in Jackson case brings up previous allegations

The Associated Press

SANTA MARIA, Calif. — Michael Jackson's prosecutors on Wednesday were able to get a witness to mention child molestation allegations that the pop star faced in 1993 but which did not result in charges.

The reference was made by a public relations specialist in front of the jury even though Superior Court Judge Michael S. Melville has not yet ruled on whether prosecutors in the current child molestation case will be allowed to present evidence from 1993.

Jackson, 46, is on trial on charges of molesting a 13-year-old cancer survivor at his Neverland ranch in 2003, giving him alcohol and conspiring to hold the boy's family captive.

The mention of the 1993 allegation came when prosecutors were questioning Ann Marie Kite, also known as Ann Gabriel Kite, about public relations problems Jack-

son faced in February 2003.

Kite listed both the Martin Bashir-produced documentary "Living With Michael Jackson," which triggered the current case, and the leaking of information from the 1993 allegations to the Web site the-smokinggun.com. Kite said the latter allegations involved inappropriate actions with a young boy.

The document released by the Web site was an affidavit from Jackson's 1993 accuser in which the boy graphically described alleged molestation by the singer.

"In combination with the Bashir documentary, I felt it was beyond a disaster," Kite said.

Defense attorney Thomas Mesereau Jr. objected to questions about 1993, and the judge cautioned jurors that they were not to consider the testimony as it related to explaining Kite's motivations and not for the "truth of the matter."

Bush says Syria must pull troops from Lebanon

The Associated Press

ARNOLD, Md. — President Bush on Wednesday demanded in blunt terms that Syria get out of Lebanon, saying the free world is in agreement that Damascus' authority over the political affairs of its neighbor must end now.

He applauded the strong message sent to Syria when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier held a joint news conference on London on Tuesday.

"Both of them stood up and said loud and clear to Syria, 'You get your troops and your secret services out of Lebanon so that good democracy has a chance to flourish,'" Bush said during an appearance at a community college in Maryland to tout his job training programs.

The world, Bush said, "is speaking with one voice when it comes to making sure that democracy has a chance to flourish in Lebanon."

The president's words, taken with those from Rice and others in the Bush administration this week, amount to the strongest pressure to date on Syria from Washington.

"Syria knows the concerns of the international community, and they know what they need to do to change their behavior and become a constructive member of the region and the international community," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said earlier Wednesday.

Turkish ambassador Osman Faruk Logoglu urged the administration to offer trade and other economic and diplomatic incentives to Syria.

"The chances of Syria withdrawing are greater than ever before," Logoglu told reporters. "But it is obviously going to take a long time."

Mullen selected to replace Clark as chief of Naval Ops

BY JON R. ANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

The commander of Naval forces in Europe has been tapped to become the Navy's next top officer.

Adm. Michael Mullen will replace Adm. Vern Clark as chief of Naval Operations, pending approval of his nomination by the Senate.

Clark has served as the Navy's 27th CNO since July 21, 2000.

A 1968 Naval Academy graduate, Mullen has served in Europe for only a few months. He has been wearing two hats: as the com-

mander of the London-based U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, and the head of NATO's Joint Force Command in Naples, Italy. Mullen took over those jobs on Oct. 8, 2004.

Before taking over in Europe, Mullen served as Clark's deputy as the Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 2003 to 2004.

Fleet assignments during his 36 years of service have included command of the George Washington Battle Group, the supply ship Nuxebie, the guided-missile destroyer Goldsborough and guided-missile cruiser Yorktown.



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Navy Adm. Michael G. Mullen will be leaving his post as commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Europe to replace Adm. Vern Clark as chief of Naval Operations.

Lawmakers eye reports of U.N. mismanagement

BY KEN GUGGENHEIM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress pressing for reforms at the United Nations are looking into possible mismanagement of \$219 million in equipment by U.N. officials.

Details of the mismanagement were included in a U.N. audit last year and described in a statement released by the U.S. mission to the United Nations in October.

That statement received little notice at the time but is getting fresh attention from the House International Relations investigations subcommittee, which will hold a hearing on U.N. operations Wednesday.

The hearing comes as the International Relations Committee looks to expand its investigation of the U.N. oil-for-food program

into a broader examination of U.N. management.

The Oct. 18 statement by the U.S. mission referred to a series of problems found by auditors.

It said auditors were unable "to verify the validity, accuracy and completeness" in the accounting of equipment by four U.N. programs: \$149.3 million by the U.N. Development Program, \$57.5 million by the U.N. Population Fund, \$10 million by the U.N. Office for Project Services and \$24 million by the U.N. Habitat Settlement Rehabilitation Program.

The U.S. mission also raised concerns that "poor financial management practices" exposed the United Nations to unnecessary risks and that several U.N. departments lacked standards for hiring consultants and the selection process was not competitive.

Desmond Butler of The Associated Press contributed to this report in New York.

GOP attacks critics of Social Security plan

BY DAVID ESPO
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans attacked the AARP as well as congressional Democrats on Wednesday as they struggled to build momentum behind President Bush's call for personal investment accounts under Social Security.

The AARP, which claims 35 million members age 50 and older, is "against a solution that hasn't been written yet," said House Majority Leader Tom DeLay after a closed-door meeting with the GOP rank and file.

He called the group's opposi-

tion to personal accounts irresponsible and hypocritical, adding that it sells mutual funds to its own membership.

A spokeswoman for the organization had no immediate comment.

DeLay and Speaker Dennis Hastert also criticized congressional Democrats, who are virtually united in opposition to Bush's plans.

"The party of no," Hastert called them.

Hastert and DeLay talked with reporters after meeting with lawmakers just back from a week spent jamming public opinion on

Social Security. DeLay said the session produced "not one negative comment by the members."

At the same time, both he and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist left open the possibility on Tuesday that final action may not be possible this year, and the Texas Republican conceded that opponents of Bush's plans were better organized than supporters.

Both DeLay and Hastert said Republicans are determined to move ahead with Bush's proposals, and several Republicans said they believe the president's national campaigning is slowly raising public awareness of the issue.

Bush and congressional Republicans have consistently sought to coax Democrats into negotiations on Social Security. Democrats have just as insistently resisted, arguing that since Republicans control the White House and both houses of Congress, they must first present a comprehensive Social Security proposal of their own.

Democrats contend Bush and Republicans want to cut benefits to pay for privatizing part of the Depression-era program, and have made clear they intend to try and use the issue at the 2006 elections.

Bush has said his plan would

guarantee that Social Security benefits would remain unchanged for retirees and workers age 55 and over.

Younger Americans would be allowed to invest a portion of their payroll taxes on their own. In exchange they would receive a lower government benefit than they are now guaranteed, on the assumption that several years of their investments would make up the difference. In addition, though, even younger voters who choose not to establish personal accounts would receive a reduced government benefit under Bush's plan, according to GOP congressional officials who have been briefed on the plan.

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Plea in terror charge

DETROIT — A man accused of hosting fund-raising meetings for a Muslim guerrilla group at his home pleaded guilty to a terrorist charge, prosecutors said.

Federal prosecutors announced Tuesday that Mahmoud Youssef Kourani hosted meetings in 2002 at which a speaker from Lebanon solicited donations for the group Hezbollah, which the United States has designated as a terrorist organization.

Kourani, 33, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to a terrorist group, prosecutors said.

The government has not identified the speaker. Prosecutors said the money was intended for a program that benefits orphans of fighters killed in Hezbollah operations or by the group's enemies.

Under a plea agreement, Kourani, 33, faces no more than five years in prison, The Detroit News reported. Sentencing is scheduled for June 14.

Fault found with Ford

CRYSTAL CITY, Texas — A Zavala County jury has hit Ford Motor Co. with a \$28 million verdict in a fatal rollover, despite evidence that the driver had been drinking before the accident and was driving at an unsafe speed.

The decision, reached in just six hours Tuesday and approved by 10 of the 11 jurors, awarded another \$3 million in damages against Saul Guerrero Jr., who was behind the wheel of the 2000 Explorer at the time of the May 2003 crash.

Cortina Garcia and Diana Alicia Alonzo, both 19, were thrown from the vehicle and killed. Passenger Arturo Guerrero, 18, and driver Saul Guerrero Jr., 19, were also ejected but not seriously injured.

he jury found Ford 90 percent responsible for the deaths, and Guerrero Jr. 10 percent responsible.

Plaintiff's lawyers had argued most of the blame lay with the automaker for using tempered side glass designed to shatter into small, rounded fragments that reduced the risk of passengers being ejected in a wreck.

"Saul Guerrero caused the accident but Ford caused the injury and the deaths," attorney Mikal Waters said in his closing argument. "The evidence is overwhelming that a safer alternative design existed. It would have cost them \$6 to \$10 a car."

Ford lawyers said the vehicle glass met all safety standards.

Georgia executes murderer

JACKSON, Ga. — A man was executed for the slaying of a pizza shop manager during a 1991 brawny spree. It was the second execution in Georgia this year.

Stephen A. Mobley, 39, was pronounced dead at 8 p.m. Tuesday after he was given an injection of chemicals at the state prison at Jackson. "The executioner," he said, "was the second execution in Georgia this year."

A federal court issued a brief stay Tuesday evening, then withdrew it. Last-minute appeals failed.

Mobley issued a lengthy final statement. "I would be remiss not to also acknowledge and make amends to family and my friends," he said. "They know who they are. There are those that say I am a bigger person than I used to be, and I appreciate that. The opportunity I have been given, I atone for what sins I committed."

From The Associated Press



Steve Fossett's Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer passes over the Atlas Mountains in Morocco on Tuesday. Millionaire adventurer Fossett is attempting the first solo, nonstop flight around the globe in the custom-built plane, although his attempt may be sidelined by a serious problem with the fuel system discovered Wednesday.

Fossett pressing ahead, despite fuel problems

The Associated Press

SALINA, Kan. — Millionaire adventurer Steve Fossett decided Wednesday to press ahead with his attempt to fly around the world solo without refueling, despite a serious problem with the plane's fuel system.

Fossett and his flight crew agreed Wednesday afternoon to keep the GlobalFlyer in the air rather than abandoning the record-setting attempt and turning back for a landing in Japan. He is now heading east over the Pacific Ocean, and the team expects to decide Wednesday night after reaching Hawaii whether to press on to the U.S. mainland.

Fossett discovered the problem

with the fuel system of the custom-built plane early Wednesday.

Project manager Paul Moore said fuel sensors in the 13 tanks differ from readings of how quickly the plane's single jet engine was burning fuel. Moore said the crew had been forced to assume that 2,600 pounds of the original 18,100 pounds of fuel "disappeared" early in the flight.

It was not clear whether the problem was with the instruments that track how much fuel remains or if some fuel had been lost because of a leak, Fossett's team said.

"This is a huge setback," Fossett said from the plane, according to a statement issued by his

staff. "I have not had this high a level of confidence at this point."

Fossett, 60, still might be able to finish the flight on his original path, if a tail wind in the jet stream remains strong enough to push him across the Pacific.

Before the fuel problem was discovered, Fossett had estimated he would complete the 23,000-mile journey at midday Thursday. He took off Monday from Salina. Fossett already holds the record for flying solo around the globe in a balloon, as well as dozens of other aviation and sailing records. The project is being financed by Virgin Atlantic founder Sir Richard Branson, a longtime friend and fellow adventurer.

College students testing debris from shuttle crash

BY MICHAEL RUBINKAM

The Associated Press

BETHLEHEM, Pa. — When the space shuttle Columbia broke apart over Texas, it scattered 84,000 pieces of debris, most of which have never been closely analyzed.

Now, two years after the disaster that killed seven astronauts, Lehigh University students are getting a rare look at these unexamined parts — and NASA hopes their findings might contribute to the design of the next generation of space vehicles.

The eastern Pennsylvania school known for its engineering and science programs is the first university in the world to be given access to the shuttle debris. A shipment of 50 pieces, ranging from windshield to wing, arrived last week.

Seniors are looking at each part

under powerful electron and light microscopes, trying to determine when and why the part stopped working and how it reacted under the extreme forces to which it was subjected.

Microscopy will reveal the "telltale signs of the mode of failure," said Lehigh professor Arnold Marder, a materials science expert.

NASA's collaboration with Lehigh is part of a program under which pieces of the shuttle are being released to the aerospace industry for research. Students will present their findings to NASA officials in April.

While NASA scientists have given every piece of debris a cursory examination, most of their efforts were focused on the hunk of foam that tore away from the fuel tank during liftoff and caused a gash in the shuttle's left wing. That gash led to Columbia's destruction during re-entry.



Lehigh University professor Arnold Marder on Monday holds up pieces of debris from the space shuttle Columbia disaster Monday during his class at the university's Whitaker Laboratory's Failure-Analysis Lab in Bethlehem, Pa. Students at the school are studying the debris.

Report: Cell phone use while driving increases

WASHINGTON — More people than ever are driving under the influence of their cell phones, according to a survey released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The survey released Tuesday showed 8 percent of drivers, or 1.2 million people, were using hand-held or handsfree cell phones during daylight hours last year, a 50 percent increase since 2002 and a 100 percent rise in four years.

All that talking is a potential safety issue, said NHTSA spokesman Rae Tyson.

Topeka keeps law barring discrimination

TOPEKA, Kan. — A minister known for picketing the funerals of AIDS victims failed in his attempt to repeal a Topeka ordinance that prohibits discrimination against homosexuals in municipal hiring.

The Rev. Fred Phelps Sr. was unaided after voters upheld the anti-discrimination measure Tuesday and publicly dared the City Council to enact another, broader ordinance.

In final, unofficial results, 53 percent, or 14,285, opposed the repeal effort, while 47 percent, or 12,795, voted for the repeal.

Had it passed, the measure also would have blocked future efforts to reinstate such a law for 10 years.

Judge removes citizenship of former Nazi guard

DETROIT — A federal judge stripped a man of his citizenship because he had his best as a guard at a Nazi labor camp and should never have entered the United States.

U.S. District Judge Paul Gadolla agreed with government prosecutors who said Iwan Mandycz was an armed guard at the Poniatowa labor camp near Lublin, Poland, for nearly six months in 1943, the Detroit Free Press reported in Wednesday's editions.

The Justice Department first initiated denaturalization proceedings against Mandycz in April 2000. Mandycz, who is in his 80s, can appeal.

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Watch out for the stampede of new nickels

Sixty-seven years after the government minted its last Buffalo Nickel, the symbol of the American West is returning to the five-cent piece. The new nickel, released Monday, features a buffalo on the back and a portrait of President Thomas Jefferson on the front. Millions of nickels will show up in cash registers within two weeks.

AP



'NYPD Blue' signs off ABC after 12 seasons

BY DAVID BAUDER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — "NYPD Blue" ended its 12-year run with Detective Andy Sipowicz making a tough decision that put his new job as commander in jeopardy.

The 261st and last episode of the groundbreaking police drama aired on ABC on Tuesday in the States after a one-hour retrospec-

tive.

"NYPD Blue" had settled into old age, in television time, with only actor Dennis Franz's Sipowicz and Gordon Clapp's Detective Greg Medavoy remaining as featured cast members from the first season to the last.

Eclipsed by hotter dramas, "NYPD Blue" inhabited a middle-of-the-pack No. 49 ranking among Nielsen Media Research's top prime-time shows, with roughly half the regular audience it had at its peak.

From the beginning, the show attracted attention for barrier-pushing language and content, including a glimpse of Sipowicz's rear end in the shower. But the quality of co-creators Steven Bochco and David Milch's series — it earned 20 Emmys, including best drama in 1995 — kept viewers tuning in.

At one point, Sipowicz wasn't even supposed to survive the first episode. But the flawed everyman became the show's emotional center, and earned Franz Emmys for best actor in 1994, 1996, 1997 and 1999.

David Caruso left after one season as Sipowicz's partner, John Kelly. He was followed by Jimmy Smits' Bobby Simone, Rick Schroder's Danny Sorrento and Mark-Paul Gosselaar's John Clark.

Smits narrated the low-key retrospective that preceded the final episode, explaining the series' central idea: "What if you took a format everyone was comfortable with — a cop show — and turn up the volume?" At the end of the special, several of the cast members took the time to address fans directly on camera. The last to go was Franz.

"Thank you," he said. "Thank you one and all."

Galaxies discovered

LOS ANGELES — NASA scientists used an infrared telescope to see past stardust and spot hidden galaxies more than 11 billion light-years from the Earth, according to a journal article published Tuesday.

Scientists used the Spitzer Space Telescope to find the galaxies, the most luminous in the universe.

The Cornell-led team identified 31 galaxies that can only be seen with the aid of Spitzer.

Thompson's death

ASPEN, Colo. — Hunter S. Thompson's body was found in a chair in the kitchen in front of his typewriter with the word "consequence" typed in the center of the page, according to sheriff's reports.

It was not immediately known what, if any, significance the word had to the founder of "gonzo" journalism or to his family.

A soft-sided gun case was found at Thompson's feet, along with a spent shell casing, according to reports.

From The Associated Press

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IN THE WORLD

U.S. accuses Iran of deceit

Says claims of nuclear ambitions are not peaceful

BY ANDREA DUDIKOVA

The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — The United States accused Iran on Wednesday of "cynically" pursuing nuclear weapons, saying Tehran's claims that its aims were peaceful constituted willful deceit and required action by the U.N. Security Council.

Jackie Sanders, chief U.S. delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency board of governors, also urged North Korea to scrap its nuclear weapons program and resume negotiations.

North Korea "needs to make a strategic choice to step off the dangerous path it has set for itself," Sanders said as the 35-member IAEA board sought agreement on a statement urging the North to return to negotiations and end nuclear threats.

Sanders' comments were in response to an agency update on Tehran's nuclear record after more than two years of examination.

Sanders characterized the IAEA report as a "starring list of Iranian attempts to hide and mislead and delay the work" of agency experts probing the country's nuclear activities.

In urging support for the U.S. drive for referral of Iran to the U.N. Security Council where it could face

sanctions — which past board meetings have refused to do — Sanders said, "the board has a statutory obligation to do so."

The IAEA review noted that while Iran allowed inspectors an initial Parchin military complex visit in mid-January, the experts' visits were limited to one site and only five buildings on that site. A new request to revisit another part of the site was refused by Iran on Sunday, the report added.

The United States alleges that Iran may be testing high-explosive components for nuclear weapons, using an inert core of depleted uranium at Parchin as a dry run for a bomb that would use fissile material.

Iran asserts that its military is not involved in nuclear activities, and the IAEA has found no firm evidence to the contrary. The agency also has not been able to support U.S. assertions that nearly 20 years of covert nuclear programs discovered more than two years ago were aimed at making nuclear weapons — not generating electricity, as Tehran claims.

But Iran insists on its right to enrichment.

"This is something that is not on the table and will not be on the table," senior Iranian envoy Sorous Nasser told reporters, saying his country had "gone through blood and sweat and tears" to develop the program.



Sirus Naseri, head of the Iranian delegation, delivers a statement after the morning session of the International Atomic Energy Agency's 35th annual board of governors on Wednesday at Vienna's International Center.

Peacekeepers kill 60
Congo rebels in battle

BY BRYAN MEALER

The Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo — U.N. peacekeepers killed as many as 60 militiamen in a stepped-up campaign to clear northeastern Congo of rogue gunmen who have preyed on residents for years and are suspected in the recent slaying of nine peacekeepers, U.N. officials said Wednesday.

The peacekeepers, backed by an attack helicopter and responding in fire, killed more people than in any other operation during their six-year mission in Congo.

Tuesday's gun battle between 242 Pakistani peacekeepers and militia fighters broke out at a heavily fortified militia camp near the village of Loga, 19 miles north of Bunia, the capital of the lawless Ituri province, said Col. Dominique Demaree, spokesman for the U.N. forces in Congo. Militia fighter opened fire on

approaching peacekeepers with heavy machine guns and anti-tank artillery, said Demaree.

Peacekeepers fired return salvos and called in an attack helicopter against the barricaded fighters, said Demaree. He said between 50 and 60 militia members had been confirmed dead.

Two peacekeepers were wounded in the barrage of gunfire and evacuated to South Africa, said U.N. spokeswoman Eliane Nabaa.

The militia, which belongs to the ethnic Lendu political party Nationalist and Integrationist Front, has been terrorizing villages of the rival Hema tribe for months. Tribal fighters have killed dozens of people, looted and burned homes, and forced over 70,000 people to flee to the hills since December.

The United Nations suspects the same militia is responsible for slaying the nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers in a well-executed ambush on Feb. 25.

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Abbas optimistic about peace deal with Israel

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said Wednesday he was optimistic Palestinians and Israelis could take advantage of a "new era of peace and hope" to reach a final peace deal that will see the realization of Palestinian statehood.

Abbas, who held talks with senior European Union officials, reiterated he was serious in implementing reforms to rein in militants. Earlier, in talks with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, Abbas said he wanted Palestinian statehood "as soon as possible."

Abbas was making his first visit to EU headquarters as the Palestinian Authority's new leader to drum up support for his reforms. Abbas told European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso that he hoped the EU would continue to provide funding for the rebuilding of key infrastructure, some of which were destroyed in fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants.

Abbas flew to Brussels after attending an international conference on the Middle East in London.

From The Associated Press

A Kosovo ethnic-Albanian man walks past photos of missing persons Tuesday in Kosovo's capital, Pristina. Talks between officials from Kosovo and Serbia will resume to deal with the issue of missing persons from the 1998-99 war, the province's prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj, declared.



Macedonia calls for resolution of border dispute with Kosovo

The Associated Press

PRISTINA, Serbia-Montenegro — Macedonia's prime minister said Wednesday that a border dispute with Kosovo should be resolved before the start of any talks on the status of the U.N.-run province.

Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski said resolution of the issue would ensure further stability for Macedonia and also would benefit Kosovo, a province that remains disputed between Serbia-Montenegro and Kosovo's ethnic Albanians.

Buckovski spoke following a meeting with Kosovo's top U.N. official, Soren Jessen-Petersen. Buckovski also met with Kosovo's prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj.

Jessen-Petersen encouraged Macedonia to have "direct dialogue in an informal way" with

Kosovo's leaders to try to resolve the dispute, while keeping Belgrade informed.

Haradinaj said after the meeting that there is "good will" and he is hopeful the dispute will be solved "at the right moment."

But in an apparent snub to Buckovski, Kosovo's President Ibrahim Rugova canceled his planned meeting with him, citing a busy schedule.

The border dispute stems from a border deal signed in 2001 between Serbia-Montenegro and Macedonia to resolve some problems left over after the breakup of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

However, a 60-mile border stretch that straddles Kosovo — which officially remains the province of Serbia-Montenegro, but has been an international protectorate since 1999 — remains contested because of the province's unresolved status.

Report: Madrid suspect had N.Y. station sketch

BY DANIEL WOOLLS

The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — A suspect in the Madrid train bombings was found to possess a sketch and technical details about Grand Central Terminal in New York, a report said Wednesday.

The sketch and data were on a computer disk seized about two weeks after the March 11 train bombings in Madrid that killed 191 people last year, the newspaper El Mundo said.

Spanish police turned the disk over to the U.S. agents from the FBI and CIA in December once they understood the scope of the technical data, the report said.

A U.S. Embassy official confirmed that American law enforcement authorities received information related to Grand Central Terminal from Span-

ish authorities in December. The official declined to go into detail.

However, a Spanish police official said Spanish and U.S. authorities don't lend much credibility to the sketch, saying it is not even clear it is a picture of Grand Central Terminal.

The police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the sketch was found in the home of Mouhammad Almalah, a Syrian who was arrested in Madrid on March 24 but later released, although he is still considered a suspect.

Almalah was questioned over his alleged ties to two suspects jailed in connection with the attack after witnesses placed them aboard trains targeted in the string of 10 bombs, El Mundo said. A total of 24 people are in jail over the attack, although at least 40 more who were arrested and released are still considered suspects.

Egypt, Saudi Arabia step in to urge Syria to pull troops out of Lebanon

BY SAM F. GHATTAS

The Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Egypt and Saudi Arabia have stepped in to persuade Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and avoid a showdown with the world, Arab diplomats say, while a few hundred activists in Beirut on Wednesday kept going with anti-Syrian demonstrations that toppled Lebanon's government.

Lebanon's staunchly pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, began the search for a new prime minister to replace Omar Karami, meeting with the speaker of parliament amid opposition pressure to ensure the new government is not dominated by Damascus.

Lebanon's worst political crisis in years has increasingly isolated Syria, with even its traditional ally Russia joining the United States, France and the United Nations in calling on Damascus to

pull its 15,000 troops out of its neighbor, where it has wielded power for more than a decade.

The two Arab powerhouse states are trying to win Syrian acceptance of a timetable for a complete withdrawal by April.

The initiative is expected to be raised during a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo late Wednesday ahead of an official meeting the next day to prepare for an Arab summit in Algeria in March. The United States, along with France, has stepped up its pressure on Syria.

The crisis also helped to have economic effects in Lebanon, a traditional center of banking and commerce. Worries over where the rapidly unfolding events are taking the country prompted a rush on U.S. dollars, forcing Lebanon's Central Bank to intervene to support the pound.

Lebanese opposition leader Walid Jumblatt demanded

Wednesday that Syria give precise dates for withdrawing its 15,000 troops from Lebanon. Syrian President Bashar Assad told Time magazine that his forces could leave Lebanon "maybe in the next few months. Not after that."

Jumblatt, who leads Lebanon's Druse, has played a major role in the "Syria Out" campaign and was scheduled to host a meeting of opposition politicians at his mountain residence outside Beirut later Wednesday.

Jumblatt has said Lahoud should resign, but other opposition leaders have said that is not on their agenda.

In Wednesday's meeting, the opposition legislators will undoubtedly discuss what approach to take to the president's consultations with legislators on the next government. If they boycott the process — as many anti-Syrian lawmakers did last year — they risk losing influence over the new Cabinet's membership.

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Clueless queen hosts guitar greats

LONDON — Queen Elizabeth II met four of Britain's most famous guitarists Tuesday, asking them: "And what do you do?"

Queen's Brian May, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck were all guests at a Buckingham Palace party to honor the British music industry.

"It's great to meet her and it doesn't matter at all that she did not know who we are or what we do," Clapton said. "I would expect her to."

Other guests included Charlotte Church, Cilla Black, Shirley Bassey, Roger Daltrey and Geri Halliwell.

Holocaust denier Zundel charged

FRANKFURT, Germany — A German judge ordered white supremacist Ernst Zundel held in jail after arraignment him Wednesday on charges of denying the Holocaust and inciting hatred.

Zundel, who was deported from Canada on Tuesday, made no statement at the closed arraignment in the southwestern city of Mannheim, court spokesman Ulrich Kreibitz said.

German prosecutors accuse Zundel of decades of anti-Semitic activities, including repeated denials of the Holocaust — a crime in Germany.

Prosecutors obtained an arrest warrant for him in 2003. Because Zundel's Holocaust-denying Web site is available in Germany, he is considered to be spreading his message to Germans.

Canadian authorities deported Zundel, 65, after a federal judge ruled that his activities were a threat to national and international security.

Major quake strikes Indonesia

TOKYO — A powerful earthquake struck eastern Indonesia late Wednesday, meteorological agencies said, and was felt as far off as Australia. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

The 7.2 magnitude quake, which did not trigger a tsunami, struck at 1042 GMT and was centered about 200 miles southeast of Ambon in the Banda Sea, Japan's Meteorological Agency said.

Officials at Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries, perhaps because of the quake's depth — 117 miles under the seabed — and distance from the mainland.

It was not immediately clear if residents in Ambon, the capital of Maluku province, felt the quake. But residents in Australia's northern city of Darwin said they could feel their houses shaking.

From The Associated Press

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KBR remarks off base

The author of "KBR needs some healthy competition" (column, G. Jefferson Price III, Feb. 11) has obviously never stepped foot in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, because his article was filled with speculation that was way off base.

For starters, KBR is serving the military in the same way it has been doing in every major theater of military operations since Vietnam, long before President Bush or Vice President Dick Cheney.

Furthermore, KBR is the primary contractor here because it is one of the pre-eminent contractors of military operations in the world. Few companies have the ability to take on a project of this magnitude. Iraqi contractors, using ancient equipment and methods of building just as old, have started construction in this camp but, after the building they were working on was deemed unsafe, and mortar and rocket attacks spiked, they were let go.

As far as the food, as a matter of fact we have mess halls filled with Lebanese workers who frequently prepare a full Middle Eastern bar, which goes largely unattended by Americans, by my accounts.

On a daily basis, three times a day in fact, our military personnel are provided with a menu of delicious American food that's piled high on their plates. Rest assured, nobody from this camp will ever go without a good, hot meal given the chance to go to the dining facility.

The author of this column has surely taken into consideration the reports of insurgents infiltrating the Iraqi police and

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army to sabotage them when he suggests that we should buy our food from them. We have a food company here as the official taste tester, and help put his tax money to good use.

Tom Crist
Camp Liberty, Iraq

Grade-school errors frequent

I've noted with pleasure recent letters encouraging proper use of the English language. I too, cringe when I'm "orientated" to a map showing the location of a recently captured "kash-ay," (F) "No cashet with 'kash-ay,'" letter, Feb. 17

Apolitical system best for DOD civilians

The Washington Post

As promised, the Defense Department has followed the Department of Homeland Security in proposing new rules on promotion and pay for its 770,000 civilian employees. Like those proposed at DHS, the new Defense Department rules are intended to modernize a large and complex system of pay, bureaucracy, and to better prepare it for the post-Sept. 11 world.

As at DHS, the Pentagon's new system sounds terrific on paper. The proposed regulations advocate an "agile and responsive" workforce, "fiscally sound" management, and a "credible and trusted" system that ensures accountability and fairness. The new arrangement, known as the National Security Personnel System, is almost all intended to link pay more closely to employee performance. Subtly, it may even give performance priority over seniority in hiring and

An extremely complex system of distributing performance-based pay is proposed, with performance will actually be measured.

firing decisions. And—just like the Department of Homeland Security's proposed changes—the proposed Defense Department service reform raises a number of alarms. This is not because it is wrong in principle, but rather because it contains in practice a number of changes that could, if not monitored, lead to the greater politicization of what should be a neutral government department.

An extremely complex system of distributing performance-based pay is proposed, with few details about how performance will actually be measured. It isn't immediately clear, for example, how performance measures in the new system will differ from those in the existing system. Without clarity—and extensive training for managers—it would take very little for politicization to creep in.

Second, this proposed reform, even more than its predecessors, appears to curtail

I find it unfortunate that soldiers may exhibit great valor, skill and endurance only to receive a medal whose citation contains a grade-school-level grammatical error. Staff officers routinely allow lower-level commanders to commit their signature to a flawed document that a soldier may want to proudly frame and display.

My actions reflect upon me, your actions reflect you, and his actions reflect him—no "thinsit." The military commonly misses the reflexive pronoun (those pronouns ending in "self/selves"). Reflexive pronouns must "reflect" either a subjective pronoun (I, we, you, he, she, it, they, who or whom). I myself, we ourselves, the Army itself, and so forth. We would not say, "His house fell upon himself." The sentence should therefore read, "His actions reflect great credit upon him, his command, and the United States Army."

Consider one of the last two Medal of Honor citations signed by a president of the United States: "Master Sergeant (Gary) Iven Gordon reflected to the world, in covering a rifle with the last five rounds of ammunition and gave it to the pilot with the words, 'good luck.' Then, armed only with his pistol, Master Sergeant Gordon continued to fight until he was fatally wounded. His actions saved the pilot's life. Master Sergeant Gordon's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest standards of military service and reflect great credit upon his unit and the United States Army."

Maj. David S. Johnson
Baghdad

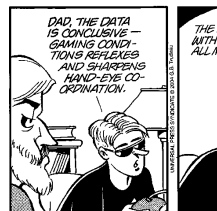
union rights in unnecessary ways. Although Pentagon officials deny it, some government employee unions say that they were not properly consulted to the new rules, as the law requires, and they have filed a lawsuit.

Union officials also say the new rules seem designed to take away workers' rights, without any clear explanation of why this is necessary. At the moment, for example, they say managers are allowed but not required to bargain with unions over job placements and assignments; the new rules appear to forbid any bargaining. The same is true of decisions about overtime. Officials ought to explain what, if anything, these changes have to do with national security, as opposed to weakening the unions.

More important, Congress ought to ask for explanations and explore in greater depth the whole issue of civil service reform. Because these personnel decisions involve so many people, and could have such national impact, lawmakers should consider stepping in to help define what performance criteria mean, to prevent a meaningful appeals process and to ensure that unions stay involved in government employee affairs, at least when there is no reason to bar them.

BY GARY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury Flashbacks



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OPINION

N. Korea's talking points: At a loss for words

THE North Korean nuclear issue is lumbering inexorably toward another moment of crisis. It is a crisis no one wants — except maybe the North Koreans.

Daniel Snieder



Here in South Korea, the government would love to turn its focus to a shaky economy. An escalation of tensions from their difficult northern brothers is the last thing it needs.

And the Bush administration has its sights set on other targets, such as Iran and Syria, not to mention Iraq. While its enthusiasm for sitting down at the table with the North Korean dictatorship of Kim Jong Il has always been minimal, the talks going forward preserve the illusion that something is being done.

Unfortunately for all of these governments, the North Koreans have, once again, turned over the table.

A few weeks ago, everyone was optimistic that Pyongyang, after an absence of nearly eight months, was about to announce resumption of the six-party talks, which also include Japan and Russia. Instead, on Feb. 10, the North Koreans suspended the bargain-

ing, pointing to various signs that, as Iraq, President Bush remained intent on regime change, not denuclearization.

They proclaimed, in the clearest wording to date, that they already had "manufactured" nuclear weapons. It removed another layer of what a senior South Korean official calls "manageable ambiguity" about the North Korean program. As long as everyone can credibly deny that there is clear proof the weapons exist, they can justify the less-than-urgent pace of their diplomacy.

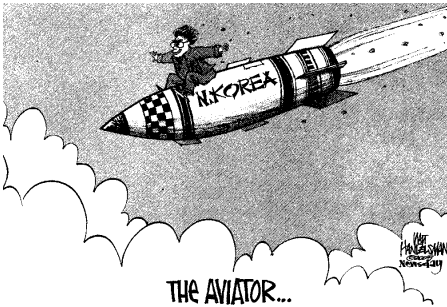
The Chinese sent a delegation to Pyongyang anyway to try to drag their recalcitrant ally back. They carried sticks — hints they may close down border traffic — and carrots — possibly increased oil shipments. In return, they got a public statement by the mercenary Kim.

We will come back to the talks, Kim said in essence, but only when we are convinced, by words and actions, that the Bush administration is not intent on overthrowing my regime. South Korean officials rushed to embrace Kim's wording as a positive shift, a view echoed here by U.S. officials.

But, as South Korean officials admit privately, what Kim said is no different from what was said two weeks ago. Pyongyang still claims to need something from Washington as a "condition" for returning to the table.

The Chinese express confidence that talks will resume shortly, but they urge "flexibility" on the part of both North Korea and the United States. Privately, Chinese officials are telling the Bush administration to respond to Kim.

Analysts here talk about providing Kim with a face-saving excuse to return to the table — a declaration from Bush or Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the United States has "no hostile intent" toward



North Korea, or that it accepts "peaceful co-existence." Those phrases, they say, more clearly state a willingness to accept the legitimacy of the Pyongyang regime as a negotiating partner.

Negotiators from Japan, the United States and South Korea met here Saturday to plan their next step, but Bush officials signaled they have no plans to yield to the North's conditions. Seoul also is not eager to challenge that stance.

"There should be no price tag for attending the talks," a senior South Korean foreign ministry official told me. "The U.S. did their part."

The Chinese may succeed in organizing another round of talks — but it might be better if they fail. The collapse of the illusion of

talks may be the only way to get to real negotiations.

The Bush administration might finally have to decide whether it is ready to accept the continued existence of the North Korean regime as a price for removing its nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang will finally have to decide if it is willing to give up the nukes — a choice it has skillfully avoided through these non-negotiations. And a crisis might also compel the South Korean government to use its desire to engage the North as real leverage by freezing the economic openings that have been forged. In the end, no deal may be possible. But the sooner we find that out — one way or another — the better.

Daniel Snieder is foreign affairs columnist for the San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News.

We're categorically denied the right to eschew labels

BY SUSAN BENJAMIN

YOU have to be living in a closet to miss hearing about the new book, "The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln," whose author, C.A. Tripp, claims Honest Abe was gay. To that, I have two responses.

My first response: Who cares? Look, Abe wasn't dating the Confederates, he was militarily challenging them. How his sexual proclivity — gay, straight or otherwise — matters in the scheme of things is beyond me.

My second response: What's with these postmortem analyses, anyway? Not only have we outed Lincoln about 150 years after his death, but we've psychoanalyzed and diagnosed countless deceased others. Take Emily Dickinson. Allegedly, Emily was not melancholic or eccentric, as we'd previously believed. She suffered from ... Light Deprivation Syndrome and, more impressively, manic-depression, before there was manic-depression.

Van Gogh, as you probably heard, was also manic and Napoleon, no surprise, suffered from acute narcissism. But did you hear about Albert Einstein? No, never genius with his head in the clouds — he was actually ADD. Not to be mistaken for the more-revved-up model — ADHD.

I learned this recently at a leadership conference. For some reason, my neighbor and I were whispering about the subject of grades when I mentioned Einstein was supposedly an average student. That's when my neighbor whispered the news: "And he was Ab-bah! ADD. That explains everything.

Of course, it isn't just the dead we force into categories. At that point in the confer-

ence, the topic was situational leadership and the participants were filling out a questionnaire to discover whether they had a High Task-Low Relationship (HT-LR) style or a Low Task-Low Relationship (LT-LR) style or a High Task-High Relationship (HT-HR) style or ... well, you know.

This, naturally enough, was on the heels of the Myers-Briggs test that, in the off-chance you haven't taken it, tells you whether you're an Introvert-Sensing-Thinking-Perceiving (ISTP) or an Extravert-Intuitive-Feeling-Judging (ENFJ). Lucky for me, my neighbor, herself ADD, was also a certified Myers-Briggs expert and could help me with the calculations. You see, I thought I was an ENTP but an really an ENFJ. Thank heavens she helped. Can you imagine the confusion that may have resulted.

All this categorizing and classifying of the living and dead points to one conclusion: As a society, we have become High Category (HC) and Low Mystery (LM) and not the other way around. You see, High Category people can explain everything. Got a kid who's wired? Can't focus in school? It's the dreaded ADHD. Hate your marriage? You're depressed.

By the way, I don't have to mention the importance of HC in the political realm, I'm sure. How good it was when George W. dragged the "L" word (liberal, in case you've forgotten) out of retirement so those who thought Kerry was a Viable Candidate (VC) would understand he's merely an "L." Worse, an MA-L.

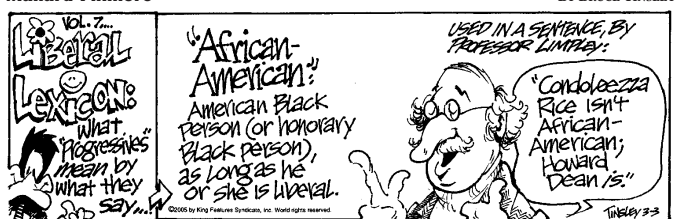
As for HMs? Well, around the time of Einstein, Dickinson, Lincoln and, oh, everyone else, most people were HMs. HMs believed love, moral decisions, personality types, you name it, were part of a grand mystery, too complex for easy answers. Instead, they grappled: Dickinson with her poetry, Einstein with his theories, and Lincoln with his angst over going to war. Imagine that?

There are plenty of HMs around today. I'm sure, only no one knows how many. They won't take the test to find out. But hold on, maybe someone, long after they're gone, will find a category anyway and, you can be sure, will write a book about them.

Susan Benjamin is a Washington-based writing consultant. She is completing her second book: "Girl Words for Sex, Sex, Marriage and Mommy and What They Secretly Say About You."

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Running alone

VT RUTLAND — Mayor John Cassarino is running for re-election, but it's not much of a race. For the second time in his six years as mayor, he has no opponent.

It's a reprieve enjoyed only once by his predecessor, former mayor Jeffrey Wennberg, who fought off challengers five of the six times he ran for office. In comparison, Cassarino has been unopposed during two out of his four campaigns for office.

The mayor said he's grateful for another stress-free re-election, adding that he plans to continue moving the city forward in the manner that has been politically successful for him so far.

Bullfighter injured

TX LA GLORIA — Bullfighter David Renk suffered seven broken ribs and a collapsed lung when he was pinned by a bull at the bloodless bullfight at the Santa Maria Bullring.

Renk was injured when the 1,000-pound bull pinned him to the ground. Fred Renk said his son's condition was improved; he remained in the Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen.

"He got hit hard. The head was on top of him, just kept grinding him in the ring," Renk said in a story The (McAllen) Monitor. "Everybody was out there with a cape trying to take him [the bull] away, but he refused to leave David."

Grandma's drug charges

WV DANVILLE — A 78-year-old woman faces drug charges and authorities are searching for her 72-year-old boyfriend after police found more than a pound of marijuana stashed in a freezer on her property.

State police arrested Mollie Williams after responding to a dispute between her granddaughter and the granddaughter's husband, who were arguing over drugs. Police learned the man allegedly had bought marijuana from Williams, State Police Cpl. Larry O'Bryan said.

Armed with a search warrant and a drug-sniffing dog, troopers went to Williams' residence near Danville. The dog led troopers to a freezer in an outbuilding where the marijuana, worth an estimated \$4,000, was hidden under frozen meat and other food, O'Bryan said.

Williams was jailed and later released on \$15,000 bond.

Steamed over smoking

RI PROVIDENCE — Bars, restaurants and businesses are now smoke-free, making Rhode Island the seventh state in the nation to ban puffing in virtually all indoor public places. The other six are California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts and New York.

The smoking ban went into effect even as some lawmakers and bar owners were mobilizing to revise it or challenge it in the courts.

The law covers thousands of bars and restaurants, and all indoor workplaces. But it extends the deadline to Oct. 1, 2006, for bars with liquor licenses that



don't serve food and groups formed as private social organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars or Knights of Columbus.

New slavery museum

SC CHARLESTON — Charleston's Old Slave Mart, where thousands of blacks were sold during the waning days of slavery, will open as a city museum next year, telling the story of the domestic slave trade.

The Old Slave Mart, a tiny, two-story building in the city's historic district, was used to auction slaves between 1856 and 1863.

As the Civil War approached and public distaste for slave trading grew, the city of Charleston banned sales of slaves in public. That's when the slave mart, with its private courtyard off the street, opened. It did a brisk business.

Nichole Green, the museum's curator, has created a database of stories and catalogued about 150 artifacts from the era.

"We want people to carry these stories with them out of the building," said Green, who is studying at Duke University for her Ph.D. in anthropology.

Not resting in peace

WI SHEBOYGAN — A woman accused of digging up and taking her boyfriend's cremated remains more than a decade ago — and drinking the beer that was buried with them — was

sentenced to 60 days in jail.

Karen Stolzmann, 44, had faced up to nine months in jail on a misdemeanor charge of concealing stolen property.

Investigators accused Stolzmann of digging up the ashes of her former boyfriend, Michael Hendrickson, at a Columbia County cemetery possibly out of spite for his family.

Hendrickson was 27 when he died in 1992 from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. His relatives contacted authorities last fall after discovering his remains were stolen.

Beer and cigarettes buried with him also were missing.

Investigators were led to Stolzmann, who had lived with Hendrickson and was with him when he shot himself. Both were married to other people at the time.

Hunting for protection

NE LINCOLN — What do Bigfoot, Noah's Ark and Amelia Earhart's plane have in common? They're all being used to make a point by Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers, who is taking aim at a measure to protect hunting.

In an attempt to mock the proposed change to Nebraska's constitution, Chambers has filed 35 amendments to protect the hunting of a myriad of other things, including the missing Earhart plane, the ark, Osama bin Laden and the Holy Grail.

"This state is not going to ban fishing, hunting and trapping," said Chambers, who believes the proposal is unnecessary.

While there is no immediate threat, there are animal rights groups that would like to see hunting, fishing and trapping outlawed, said Sen. Ed Schroek, who introduced the measure. "I think we should probably get out ahead of this."

The proposed amendment would add one paragraph to the state constitution that says fishing, trapping, and hunting are a "valued part of the heritage of the people and will be a right forever preserved."

A honky-tonk school

TX PASADENA — A quarter-century after Gilley's Club became the world's most famous honky-tonk, local school officials plan to turn the site into a middle school.

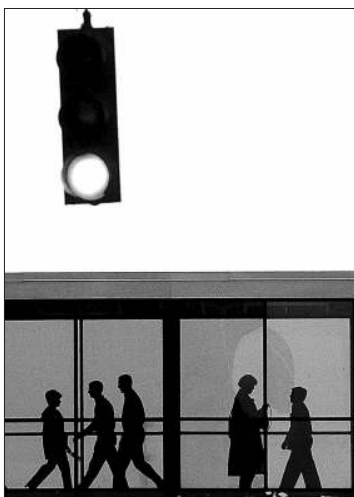
The Pasadena Independent School District bought the nearly 15-acre site where the club — that with its mechanical bull ride became an international tourist draw after it was featured in the 1980 movie "Urban Cowboy" — once stood in this Houston suburb.

The Pasadena school district agreed to pay nearly \$440,000 in back taxes to purchase the property.

Seattle fault worries

WA BELLEVUE — A study by the state Division of Emergency Management concluded that a 6.8 magnitude quake along the Seattle fault would kill 1,660 people, injure 24,200, collapse buildings and bridges and cause \$33 billion in damage.

The 30-mile-long fault runs through the city and suburbs east of Lake Washington.



Taking the dry route A walkway in uptown Charlotte, N.C., has plenty of foot traffic as people avoided the cold rains that fell in the metro area by using the skyway on their way to work.



Arlington visitors Canada geese walk in the snow among the headstones at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va.



Never too old Reinaldo Diaz, 21, center left, and Nick Pickett, 24, center right, help children build a snowman at Fallon Park Elementary School in Roanoke, Va.



A fruitful run In between rain showers, Dan Cadigan of Longview, Wash., runs a Lake Sacajawea trail in Longview that has been brightened by a blooming cherry tree.



A beautiful surprise

Ruth Zerr stands on the porch of her home in El Paso, Texas, to look over Mexican gold poppies that have sprung up in her rock-landscaped front yard. Zerr said the poppies have grown at her home during the spring each of the past three years. The poppies grow in a desert area along a road a mile from Zerr's home. Zerr said she believes the wind blew seeds into her yard where they took root in the dirt below the rocks.



Challenging work

Jen Salmons of Mount Carmel College of Nursing in Columbus, Ohio, hammers in a nail on a Habitat for Humanity home in Boynton Beach, Fla. Salmons was taking part in Habitat's Collegiate Challenge for students on spring break. Each student paid \$100 to be part of the challenge.



Mother's little helper

J.T. McCordle, 4, helps fold the family laundry at G & G Laundry in Owensboro, Ky.

Inmate pilot program

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — Sixty inmates will be released from the Oklahoma County jail to participate in a program for nonviolent mentally ill people. Those who succeed in the four-month program could be sentenced to probation or other forms of punishment including mental health court or drug court.

Molar Express rolls in

NH LITTLETON — A mobile dentist's office hits the North Country's roads next month to provide care for people who can't afford customary dental visits.

The Molar Express is supported by the North Country Health Consortium and is aimed at providing basic dentistry services, initially to children, in northern Coos and Grafton counties.

"What we're doing is really taking care of the children who are on the Healthy Kids program," said Anne Corridan of Molar Express.

Healthy Kids is the state Medicaid program for children.

Twenty-nine percent of children in the North Country are eligible for Healthy Kids, versus 18 percent statewide.

No jail for nacho man

TN MARYVILLE — A man caught by police last summer on his 23rd birthday running naked and covered in nacho cheese has pleaded guilty to burglary, public intoxication and other charges.

But he won't be going to jail. In a plea deal with prosecutors, Michael David Monn was sentenced to three years in prison but was given supervised probation.

Prosecutors said Monn was drunk when he broke into a swimming pool snack bar in July 2004.

A police officer found Monn in the facility's parking lot after Monn had apparently scaled an 8-foot-tall fence and was seen running toward a Jeep with a box of stolen snacks and a container of nacho cheese.

Delivering the cash

NY ALBANY — Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., told the state's mayors he's confident lawmakers and the Bush administration will agree on a federal highway spending bill of roughly \$300 billion. Schumer said the deal would fund a number of road projects across upstate New York.

Midwives investigated

FL BRADENTON — Authorities are investigating two women for allegedly acting as midwives without a license after Mara McGlade, 25, died of extensive bleeding and other delivery difficulties last December. McGlade was hospitalized after giving birth to a boy at home and died two days later.

No race for attorney

IA DES MOINES — Des Moines attorney Doug Gross said he won't seek the Republican nomination for governor in 2006. Gross, who ran unsuccess-

fully against Gov. Tom Vilsack in 2002, says he's confident he could win the nomination but the strain would be too great for his family.

Sentenced for slavery

MD GREENBELT — A Maryland land woman was sentenced to more than 17 years in prison for forcing a Cameroonian girl to work as a domestic servant for no pay, beginning when the girl was 11.

Theresa Mubang, herself originally from Cameroon, was convicted by a federal jury in November of involuntary servitude and harboring an alien. Prosecutors said she forced the girl to cook, clean and take care of Mubang's young children from November 1996 until November 1998. She also beat the girl, they alleged.

Mubang fled shortly after her conviction and was not in court for the sentencing. Her attorney, Peter Goldman, said Mubang's use of a domestic servant was part of the "cultural norms" she brought from Cameroon.

Sealing up old mines

NM LORDSBURG — A Truth or Consequences company was awarded a \$173,000 contract to seal the opening to 35 abandoned mines near Lordsburg this year. St. Cloud Mining Co. will backfill most of the openings. Some will be blocked off by gates, allowing access by bats and owls.

Cashing in on trash

PA PEN ARGYLE — Garbage pickup is now free in this Northampton County borough. However, officials are still publishing the names and addresses of residents with outstanding garbage bills. The uncollected bills range from \$130 to nearly \$2,500 by the owner of some apartments.

Beneficial rains

AZ PHOENIX — Ravaged by wildfires in recent years, the Southwest could see a quieter fire season in 2005 because of rain storms that have drenched the region this winter, according to a government forecast.

The report predicted significant activity may not start until May because trees, shrubs and grass are wetter than normal.

In a region haunted by an almost decade-long drought, some fire seasons have started as early as February and lasted as late as October. The normal fire season runs from May to mid-July.

The added moisture is good for the mountainous high country, but bad for the desert. That is because the longer the moisture lingers in desert areas, the taller and thicker vegetation will grow — providing fuel for brush fires.

Show them the money

TN CHATTANOOGA — A group advocating adoption of a state income tax challenged Gov. Phil Bredesen to reveal his funding sources for major initiatives, including higher education, a preschool program and more aid to local governments. Tennesseans for Fair Taxation said their proposal would lower taxes for most residents.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

YOUR MONEY

MILITARY UPDATE

Congress may enforce VA fees in near future

Tom Philpott

Enrollment expenses of \$230 will effect 2.4 million vets

Republican majorities on the House and Senate veterans' affairs committees have voted to impose an enrollment fee of at least \$230 a year on 2.4 million veterans — one of every three now eligible to use VA health care.

Those targeted are in priority categories 7 and 8, meaning they are neither poor nor suffering from service-connected disabilities. Half of the 2.4 million used the VA health system last year.

The Bush administration proposed the enrollment fee to hold down costs. The VA committees rejected another Bush proposal to raise co-payments on VA-filled prescriptions for these same Priority 7 and 8 veterans.

While both committees endorsed enrollment fees, differences emerged. The Senate panel, chaired by Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, embraced the Bush plan for a straight \$250 annual fee. The House committee, chaired by Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind., voted

to set the fee for Priority 7 enrollees at \$230, matching the enrollment fee for under-65 military retirees using Tricare Prime, the military managed care program. For Priority 8 veterans, Buyer proposes a sliding scale fee, of \$230 to \$500, depending upon income.

Both Craig and Buyer, in separate letters to their budget committees, said difficult choices have to be made this year, given a tight VA budget and the number of new veterans returning from war with severe injuries. Against that backdrop, they felt the enrollment fees against the stiff criticism expected from veterans' service organizations.

"VA must gather supplemental funding from some source, and there are no easy options," Craig wrote. To critics who say \$250 is not modest for some veterans, Craig pointed to the Tricare enrollment fee paid by military retirees who have at least 20 years. Shorter-serving veterans are no

less worthy, Craig wrote, but neither are they "more worthy as a class than military retirees."

Buyer wrote that "Congress enacted in 1996 by voting to open VA health care to "lower priority, non-service-connected categories of veterans." Assumptions that such a move would be "budget neutral" were wrong, he said. So it's time to refocus VA health resources on the "disabled, injured, low-income and special needs veterans," Buyer wrote.

Buyer also said enrollment fees will "correct the inequity" between lower-priority veterans and Tricare users "who pay an enrollment fee and deductibles and who have higher co-payments." His committee "at this time" is not directing that lower-priority veterans also match Tricare deductibles and co-payments. P.O. Buyer hinted he might return to those disparities in future VA budgets.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 1111, Centerville, VA 20120-1111, e-mail militaryupdate@aol.com or visit www.militaryupdate.com

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, center, shown at a health care news conference Monday with Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., left, expressed support for the Senate's bankruptcy bill as a Democratic amendment failed.

Senate bankruptcy plan goes easy on troops, vets

By MARCY GORDON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Active-duty military personnel and some veterans who file for bankruptcy got a break from the Senate as it considered ways to toughen laws allowing people to erase their debts.

While senators debated a bill on Tuesday to overhaul the bankruptcy code, Democrats expressed concern about hardships for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, citing cases of people in the National Guard and Reserves who have seen their businesses fail after they were called up to serve.

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., proposed a far-reaching plan to soften the blow of a stricter bankruptcy regime on military personnel, but Republicans seized the issue by offering a narrower proposal.

Earlier, they said they wanted a bill without amendments. Durbin's plan was defeated by a 58-38 vote. The GOP alternative cleared on the mostly party-line vote, 63-32, in the Republican-controlled Senate. Several Demo-

crats voted for it, but most opposed the amendment because they had supported Durbin's proposal.

The amendment by Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., would allow for special accommodations for active-duty service members, low-income veterans and those with serious medical conditions in a new income test for bankruptcy applicants. Durbin had proposed exempting members of the military.

"Many men and women in the military are making extraordinary sacrifices," said Durbin, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat. "It's unfair that they should come home to face this new harsh bankruptcy law."

About 16,000 active-duty members of the military file for bankruptcy each year, according to congressional investigators.

The bankruptcy overhaul bill would raise the threshold for erasing credit card and other consumer debts in bankruptcy court.

Supporters predicted an imminent victory after nearly eight years of congressional gridlock and feverish lobbying for the bill by banks and other credit-card issuers.

TUESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES				
52-week High	Low	Index	Net Chg	% YTD
10,888.8	9,768.40	Dow Jones Industrials	+657.7	+5.9
3,623.8	2,421.46	Dow Jones Transportation	+12.6	+0.8
358.20	259.08	Dow Jones Utilities	+35.8	+10.5
1,521.39	1,154.74	NASDAQ Composite	+125.03	+10.9
2,181.60	1,750.62	Nasdaq Composite	+193.7	+10.9
1,217.80	1,064.72	S&P 500	+48.81	+5.7
548.29	548.29	S&P MidCap	+1.64	+0.3
656.11	515.90	Russell 2000	+69.53	+10.7
12,704.4	10,265.2	DJ Wilshire 5000	+119.75	+0.8

NYSE				
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Net Chg	Most Active (\$1 or more)	Net Chg	% YTD
East	84512.2	SPDR	65046.8	+21.2
Bank	38133.3	2-10	35441.1	+1.9
Energy	30097.1	3-17	29920.0	+2.0
Health	26522.2	4-18	26522.2	+0.0
Technology	25060.8	24-1	25060.8	+0.0
Telecom	22899.6	4-18	22899.6	+0.0
Financial	22847.1	17-9	22847.1	+0.0
Real Estate	18818.8	35-15	18818.8	+0.0
Health	16191.1	35-22	16191.1	+0.0
Materials	14038.8	15-13	14038.8	+0.0

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS				
Name	Div	PE	Last	% YTD
Airbus Helicopters	17	89.00	53.7	+5.1
Aradigm	17	43.18	11.18	+4.7
Boeing	24	14.69	48.1	+5.2
General Dynamics	15	47.00	57.1	+6.6
Lockheed Martin	18	22.75	108.1	+5.8
Comptech Systems	144	17.02	14.21	+4.4
General Electric	88	22.35	35.2	+5.3
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Stripes Travel



PHOTOS BY SCOTT SCHONAUER/Stars and Stripes

Above: Jutta Huser, a tourist from Germany, calmly allows a Moroccan snake charmer's cobra to circle around her neck as the charmer entertains a crowd in Tangier.

Right: A carpet dealer from a Tangier offers a rug made in the Atlas Mountains.



Moroccan madness

In spicy Tangier, locals want you to buy, buy, buy

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

Tangier, Morocco, is a whiff of smelling salt for the senses. The coastal town can be revolting and pleasant, slightly scary and fascinating — all within a city block. The delightful scent of spices from the market can quickly turn to the pungent smell of rotting food with the turn of the corner. Down the street, children playing with a soccer ball share space with smiling snake charmers.

Morocco is a quick ferry ride from Spain, but it might as well be a world away.

Stepping off the boat into what is known as the "Gateway to Morocco" feels like being an alien arriving on another planet.

You wonder if the port's shady reputation as an outpost for hustlers, drug dealers and refugee runners is true. There is a tinge of mystery and a hint of anxiety

for what lies ahead. A circus of belly dancers, handicapped beggars, haggling carpet dealers, one-eyed fishmongers, camel drivers and a seemingly endless supply of pesky street peddlers inhabit the labyrinth of streets and alleys.

Nothing says "We're not in Europe anymore" more clearly than the city of Tangier.

Whether that is a good feeling or not, depends on one's thirst for adventure and the experience of the traveler.

High-speed catamarans launching from Spain's wind-swept town of Tarifa zoom passengers across the Strait of Gibraltar in as little as 35 minutes.

Most visitors are day-trippers on vacation in southern Spain who can't resist the chance to cross the strait, visit another continent and be back at their hotel in time for *paella* and sangria.

A day trip to the coastal city of Tangier sounds exotic, almost romantic. Exotic might be a good word to describe it. Romantic is not.

Neither is it boring.

Tour agencies offer package deals from Spain. I bought a trip that included transportation to Tangier, the ferry ride, lunch and a guided tour for 85 euros — about \$112.

The bus picked up our group, most of them German tourists, at various hotels in and around downtown Rota, close to the Navy base. The first stop was at about 7:30 a.m.

On the way, our tour guide, Maria Elvira Garcia Fernandez, gave us an overview of the trip, the do's and don'ts, including customs and the faux pas of taking photos of some locals.

"Some people feel that taking a photo of them steals their soul," she said.

Since it was during Ramadan, when Muslims abstain from drinking, smoking and eating from sunrise to sunset, she warned that tempers would be short. More than 98 percent of the country is



AP/Stars and Stripes

SEE TANGIER, PAGE 20

TANGIER, FROM PAGE 19

Muslim.

"Often, the locals take out their frustrations on the tourists, who can eat, drink and smoke during Ramadan as long as they're not Muslim," she said.

After a two-hour bus ride from Rota, we hopped on board the catamaran and slipped into its airline-style seats. As comfortable as the chairs are, some passengers couldn't bear the ride across the rolling swells and lost their breakfasts. The catamaran is similar to what the U.S. military uses and is affectionately nicknamed the "Vomit Comet" by Marines.

Heed this warning: Don't take a seat near the bathroom or you will be within earshot of the guttural heaves.

The Navy base in Rota doesn't sponsor tours to Morocco anymore because of security concerns, so I asked if I should be worried that I am an American.

"Not at all," Garcia said. "They love Americans."

They actually like all visitors, especially those who come to buy. It doesn't matter whether you spoke English, German or Swahili. Chances are that somebody in Tangier spoke your language and had something to sell.

A line of freelancing tour guides, taxi cab drivers and street hawkers made up an enthusiastic welcoming party that would stay with us most of the day. The best part of arriving on the pier with a guide is that he or she can be a buffer from the badgering merchants. If you're with a guide, you're "already taken."

A tour guide, however, won't shield you from the wave after wave of street salesmen and boys selling everything from leather purses to bongo drums. They followed our group's every move throughout the day like the paparazzi shadowing Brad Pitt. Buying something seemed to be like throwing chunk to a pool of sharks. Remember, there's nothing wrong with saying, "No." In fact, savvy travelers going through the gauntlet of street peddlers will say it early and often.

This might be the only time rudeness is a virtue.

We began our tour of Tangier with a windshield tour of the city in a taxi. We drove through the Jewish, English, Spanish and American quarters. The city is unlike any other Moroccan town because of its mix of cultures.

Our drive took us past the summer homes of Saudi royalty, wealthy Egyptians and a compound that serves as a summer residence for Morocco's king. At the top of the hill, apparently waiting for us to arrive, three men stood with camels. Men selling hats, jewelry and purses hovered nearby.

For a small fee, people could hop onto one of the camels and pose for photographs. Those who climbed on top got a whirlwind ride around a small dirt lot on the side of the road.

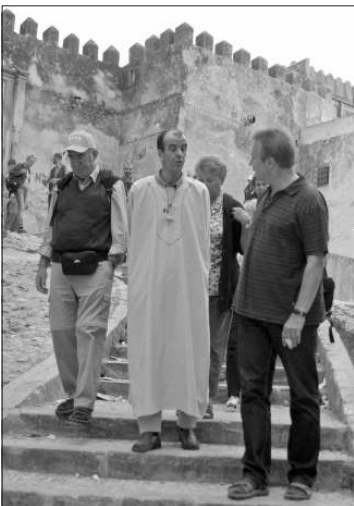
It served as a cheesy photo opportunity but little else. Better snaps could be taken down the road.

Tangier is the fifth-largest city in Morocco, and the vistas from atop the English quarter offered



PHOTOS BY SCOTT SCHONAUER/Stars and Stripes

A fisherman casts his net in the bay off the coast of Tangier, Morocco. The city is a mix of old and new buildings, of beautiful homes and dirty slums, of exotic scents and disgusting odors.



Tour guide Hassan Scelfati answers questions as he ushers a group of tourists through the streets of Tangier.

the best views of the urban jungle below.

We met up with the rest of the group on the edge of the Old City.

We walked deep into the heart of the city, where we got a better slice of Tangier life. Women washed clothes in a public foun-

tain, and children ran in and out of the tight alleyways playing tag. A snake charmer on one corner brought out his snake while a pair of men played drums.

The few charming parts of town give way to slums dominated by the smell of urine and

garbage. This is where Tangier earns its bad reputation. As we strolled through some neighborhoods, women in our group clenched their purses like a vice.

After walking past tiny hair salons, tailors, bakeries and butcher shops, we stopped on a corner.

It wasn't to see a monument, visit a mosque or hear about a historical landmark. Our guides had taken us to a souvenir stand with postcards and other trinkets.

I wanted to buy a guidebook to see what we could've seen if we didn't spend so much time looking at guidebooks.

There is a souk, or open-air market, for everything. Leather, fruit and vegetables and spices are for sale. This is what Morocco is all about. This is what a visitor wants to see.

The urge is to break away from the group and meander the streets, taking in the potpourri of colors and smells of the medina.

Vendors were selling grilled meat on the streets, but lunch plans took us to a restaurant down an alley close to the markets.

The guides called this a "typical Moroccan restaurant," but it is doubtful the typical Moroccan eats at this place. Everyone, except the waiters and a three-man band, was a tourist.

Lunch was included in the price of the trip, but customers paid extra for beer brewed in Morocco. The meal included soup, a second course of shish kebabs, and a main dish of traditional couscous with chicken and black olives. Mint tea was served with a dessert that included a pastry drenched in honey.

It was tasty. Toward the end of the meal, a portly woman covered in a silk gown and wearing a straw hat

About Morocco

Moroccans call the American section of Tangier "California," but, today, few Americans call it home.

The United States has had a long and sometimes notorious history with the eccentric city that some say is Africa's version of Tijuana, Mexico.

During the early 20th century, it stood as a trendy international city, where American novelist Paul Bowles wrote books and the late millionaire Malcolm Forbes owned a palace.

The city also had a seedy side, attracting pirates, money launderers, pimps and prostitutes. The wealthy international elite are gone, but con men, unscrupulous money changers and hookers remain in the shadows of what was a popular expatriate outpost decades ago.

Morocco was the first country to recognize U.S. independence. In 1821 Moroccan Sultan Moulay Suliman gave the United States a building, the first piece of property acquired abroad by the U.S. government, which became the American Legation — one diplomatic step below an embassy.

It has been renovated and expanded through the years, and today holds a museum tracing the relationships between the two countries.

— SCOTT SCHONAUER

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THE QUEST FOR KILIMANJARO

Climbers find mountain a spellbinding challenge

BY GIG GWIN

The Traveler's Century Club

From its sprawling foothills dotted with farms to its ice-capped summit, Kilimanjaro stands alone, Africa's grandest and highest mountain at 19,340 feet. As many as 20,000 climbers arrive at the Tanzanian base camps each year intent on making it to Uhuru Peak. About 70 percent of those who try succeed. The others fall victim to altitude sickness.

Still, it sounds like an incredible adventure, and it is — especially for an average, middle-aged guy like me.

The first thing to understand about the climb is that it isn't a climb in the technical sense. There are no ropes, spikes or crampens involved. It's a trek — a long, wearying, gut-testing hike up a series of trails over six days.

For those who aren't extremely fit, there is a price to pay for making the climb. I was physically drained for 2½ weeks afterward. For more than two months, my toes were black and blue, a result of them being shoved against the front of my shoes during the trudge back down the mountain.

But it was a price worth paying for the sheer joy of standing on Africa's rooftop, looking out over the plains of Kenya and the green slopes of Tanzania.

Ironically, it wasn't my idea to make the climb. I had planned to go to Tanzania to visit the Serengeti, where every day safe-

ris descend into "the Garden of Eden," the Ngorongoro Crater. It's one of the most unforgettable places on Earth. But my traveling companion, Bill Droege of Germantown, N.Y., insisted that we try the climb to the top of Kilimanjaro.

I had some doubts. I wondered how much, at age 57, my athletic skills were waning. Bill, 55, is a seasoned trekker. I am a paper pusher. He routinely runs three miles a day; I tire after nine holes on a golf cart. But the romantic lure of Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" inspired me to accept the challenge.

The cost is relatively modest — a fully guided, six-day trek with porters, food and lodging runs about \$1,000, which includes a \$350 park fee. For joggers and fitness addicts, climbing Kilimanjaro is a tailor-made adventure.



Photos courtesy of Gig Gwin

Above, stunning sunrises and sunsets are a special treat of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This is a sunrise over Mawenzi Peak as seen from the summit of Gilman's Point.

At left, climbers pass the treeline on the third day of the hike.

For average Joes, my advice is to get in shape before you go.

Bill and I planned our adventure down to the slightest detail. I ran every day and lost 10 pounds as I acquainted my feet with the pounding they would take on a six-day climb. As we neared our departure date in February, our

tour operator provided us with an extensive list of supplies. Since I'm not a camper, I had to educate myself about some of the equipment, such as polypropylene long johns, Gortex outerwear, gaiters and a balaclava.

At my insistence, we went on safari first. The Serengeti Plains and Ngorongoro Crater are not to be missed — we saw thousands of animals and took hundreds of pictures. Then came the day we arrived at the base camp hotel beneath Mount Kilimanjaro.

The Marangu Hotel provided equipment (including a walking pole) and a briefing the day before the start of the six-day climb. This charming hotel offers a home base for many of the climbers who are using the popular Marangu Trail. Although there are several climbing trails, Marangu is the easiest and least expensive route, and it provides huts to stay in at night.

Our pre-trip briefing by hotel director Desmond Brice-Bennett

answered a lot of our questions.

"Altitude is the first concern of every climber," he said, "and your body must gradually adjust to the elevation. So the rule of the day is, go slow and enjoy the hike."

Brice-Bennett also said that dehydration is a concern, so drinking three to four liters of water a day was essential. The third concern is sun — five days of open hiking can produce severe sunburn — so sunblock and a hat were necessities.

After the briefing, we had a full inspection of equipment and clothing. It's important to have the right equipment but not add weight for the porters to carry.

We met the porters and guides after a hearty breakfast. After a short ride to Marangu Gate, Kilimanjaro National Park, there is an official registration and sign-in for the climb. Each of our four porters mounted about 50 pounds of equipment over his



At 15,500 feet, Kibo Camp stands as the last sleeping site before hikers begin their midnight trek to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

SEE CLIMB, PAGE 23



Gig and Bill's personal guides use the English names Trevor, left, and John, rather than their Swahili names during the climbs.

CLIMB, FROM PAGE 22

head. Then, with backpacks secure and walking poles in hand, we were off.

The trail begins in a rich rain forest that weaves around huge tropical trees, waterfalls and jungle flowers. Wildlife is surprisingly sparse, with only an occasional monkey or bird. After climbing four hours to 9,000 feet, we reached our first overnight stop.

Mandara Hut is a spartan settlement providing basic needs and a respite for the weary. The A-frame huts are a bit claustrophobic but appropriate for adventure lovers. I'm more of a Marriott type, but when you're tired, the huts are fine.

The camp featured a distinct international atmosphere, with people from Europe, Asia and North America. English, however, was the common language.

We were up at the break of dawn the next day for a breakfast of porridge and tea and then the normal equipment check before an eight-hour trek to the next hut.

Sunrises are an African master piece above the clouds. The hike begins in the moorlands and winds through unspoiled trails upward to 12,000 feet. By now my legs and feet were starting to hurt.

Day three found us walking through a moonlike area known as the saddle. We passed through the picturesque twin peaks of Kilimanjaro and reached the Kibo hut in early afternoon. This basic camp area, at 15,500 feet, is at the base of the final sharp ascent. Before retiring, a final check of equipment was mandatory. Sleep was difficult; the anticipation of the final climb was on everyone's mind.

The moment of truth was at hand. Our guides woke us at midnight because an early start is required. The idea is to get to the top of the mountain and back to the camp before the sun goes down the next day. The only nourishment we were allowed was some hot tea — climbing on a full stomach is to be avoided.

This was the steepest part of the climb, and with flashlights in hand, we were once again reminded to go *poli poli* (Swahili for "slow") because of the time needed to acclimate to the altitude. The trail is rock and sand, and each step is deliberately slow and precise. Our walking poles were a great tool for preventing backsliding on the loose scree.



AP/Stars and Stripes

Some groups had pushed ahead, while others were winding up the trail behind. Only flashlights were visible in a zigzag, firefly pattern.

An hour into the ascent, my friend Bill dropped to his knees and started dry heaving. "I've got to go down. I'm dizzy," he said.

"No," I said. "Just rest, and we'll continue — you'll adjust."

Four times he tried to resume the climb, but altitude sickness had nailed him at 17,000 feet. Finally, one of the guides shouldered Bill and started down the dark mountain.

"Climb it for both of us," he said.

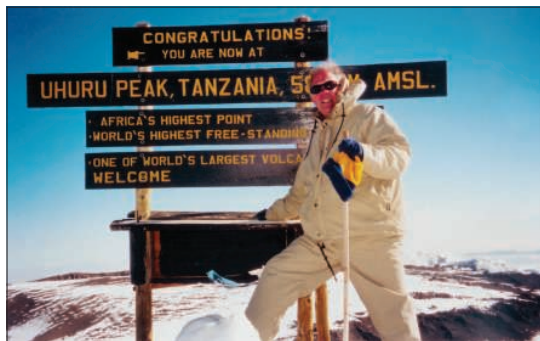
What a reversal of events — he was the trekker, my mentor. He was the explorer who had hiked three times through the Himalayas. He had the knowledge, not me; I'd never trekked longer than a day in my life.

I took stock of myself in the dark, only a third of the way to the top. Our theory had been that



Photos courtesy of Gig Gwin

Clouds hover above a glacier at the rimline of Kilimanjaro Peak.



A triumphant Gig Gwin poses for a photo at Uhuru Peak, the highest point in Africa.

the true climb was 75 percent mental and 25 percent physical, and now it would be tested. The words of the original briefing came back to me: "Fast spells failure, slow wins the battle."

"Seize the moment," I thought, looking at my guide, John, and I muttered with conviction, "poli poli." Slowly up the African mountain we trudged.

Heads down, with flashlights watching for dangerous rocks and slippery footing, we plodded one step at a time. The altitude was taking its toll, and I rested often. Small groups of climbers started passing me as I sat on boulders, sucking hard for oxygen. Some had encouraging words: "You can make it," "Don't stop now," "See you at the top."

My progress seemed minuscule as John and I finally reached the halfway mark, an area called the caves. It seemed as if an eternity had passed, but John said, "Mr. Gig, we are halfway," and he smiled.

As I looked up at the mountain, most of the flashlights were now above me. While I rested on a welcome boulder, a parade of determined Brits, Germans, Swedes and Japanese passed by, leaving me behind with my thoughts.

Finally we entered the toughest part, the switchbacks. John's feet were almost above my head; the steepest part was the last

- **Location:** Mount Kilimanjaro is in northern Tanzania, near the Kenya border, about 140 miles south of Nairobi, Kenya.
- **Height:** 19,340 feet.
- **Summits:** Kibo (19,340 at Uhuru Peak) and Mawenzi (16,890 feet).
- **Tail blazers:** The first Europeans to reach the Kibo summit were German geographers Hans Meyer and Austrian mountaineer Ludwig

Purtscheller in 1889.

• **Point of interest:** The Kibo summit is covered with snow and ice even though Kilimanjaro is only 3 degrees south of the equator.

• **Outfitter:** Marangu Hotel, P.O. Box 40, Moshi, Tanzania. Telephone, 255-27-27565941 or 255-27-2756361; fax 255-27-2756591; e-mail info@maranguhotel.com.

— GIG GWIN

The details

1,000 feet. Two more climbers with altitude sickness were descending with help from their guides. I reminded myself, "Fast is bad, slow is good."

A few climbers had made it in four hours to the crater rim, an area called Gilman's Point. Some had made it in five hours to view the magnificent sunrise. I chose to view this spectacular display of nature sitting on the side of the mountain, 200 feet from the top.

Then, with one last burst, I dragged my exhausted body to the crater rim, 6½ hours after the midnight start. I received warm congratulations from other hikers, some already beginning their descent. My guide hugged me as I attempted to breathe air that contained about half the normal amount of oxygen. The hammer blow of altitude had hit.

"You and I go down now," John insisted.

"No, John," I said weakly, "give me 10 minutes, and we'll walk the crater rim to Uhuru Peak."

"No," John said. "We should go down now."

But I prevailed, caught my breath, and off we trekked around this incredibly beautiful crater.

The top of Kilimanjaro is bigger than you can imagine. Pillared ice fields surround the rim. The sight of these glaciers glistened in the morning sun and the cold wind were numbing. As we trudged through the snowy slopes, I exchanged high-fives with returning hikers. There were words of encouragement

and thumping gloves as I lumbered toward Uhuru Peak.

Stark beauty was everywhere. Directly below, the deep circular crater was abundant with snow.

A halcyon calm came over me; I felt as if in an inner peace. Hikers had said euphoria would take over and I'd forget the shortness of breath, the wind, cold and annoying headache. Triumphant photos were taken, and the awesome vista was imprinted in my mind. Then we started down.

Last up, last down — it took me 13 hours round trip to trek back to Kibo camp. All other climbers had already left for the lower huts. So after a short rest, and four more hours of forcing one foot after the other (but this time it was all downhill), we arrived at Mandara Hut. John should've been paid time and a half for his extra hours.

Wandering into camp, I was met by Bill, who was now back in good health. I offered condolences; he extended congratulations.

"Sometimes you get the mountain," Bill said. "Sometimes the mountain gets you."

The next night, back at Marangu Gate, we signed the park rangers' victory log and shared cold beer with our porters and guides. After we handed out gratuities, they returned the favor by singing a spellbinding African chant.

And with that, the quest for Kilimanjaro was complete.

Gig Gwin, owner of Gwins Travel in St. Louis, is one of only a handful of people to have visited every country in the world, as recognized by the Travelers' Century Club. He completed his 100th by visiting his 318th country in 1999. He welcomes your e-mails at gwin@gwin.com.



Above: A Moroccan man entertains a group of German tourists in Tangier. At right: Tangier's casbah, or old fortress.



Moroccan children stand near a gateway in Tangier.

TANGIER, FROM PAGE 20

danced around the restaurant as the small band played. She twirled around and shimmied her belly but didn't show any skin. Good thing. We had just eaten.

After lunch, our guides took us to the city's superstore of souvenirs, a Wal-Mart of Moroccan handicrafts. Several floors sold everything from ceramics to carpets.

"Whatever you do, don't pay the asking price," our guide instructed.

A salesman boasted that the store had the best Moroccan-made carpets

and rugs in Tangier. Since I had been in Morocco for only a few hours, I couldn't debate that claim.

Rolls of carpets, large and small, filled the sides of the room. The salesman and some of his associates rolled out more than a dozen carpets. Hagglng brought the price of one beautiful rug down by more than 50 percent from the original price, but I balked at dropping several hundred dollars and walked away.

At around 3:30 p.m., I caught up with the rest of our group at our next and last stop of the day — the spice shop.

It is there that Sai'd Khayat ripped into his spiel about the many spices, oils, herbs and powders from the region. He stood in front of a table full of jars filled with stuff that he claimed would cure everything from a headache to a poor libido. An orange powder for meats and chicken was perfect "for people who can't cook," he said, chuckling.

By this time it was after 4 p.m. and our day in Tangier was almost over. But the onslaught of salesmen was not.

As we got closer to our ferry trip home, peddlers seemed to pop out of nowhere. Some trailed our group for several blocks, showing their belts, bracelets and golden camels in people's faces as we tried to flee.

They knew the group was leaving and they were making one last attempt at making a sale.

I suddenly had dark thoughts of what it would have been like to have brought a Taser gun with me.

It was too much for some.

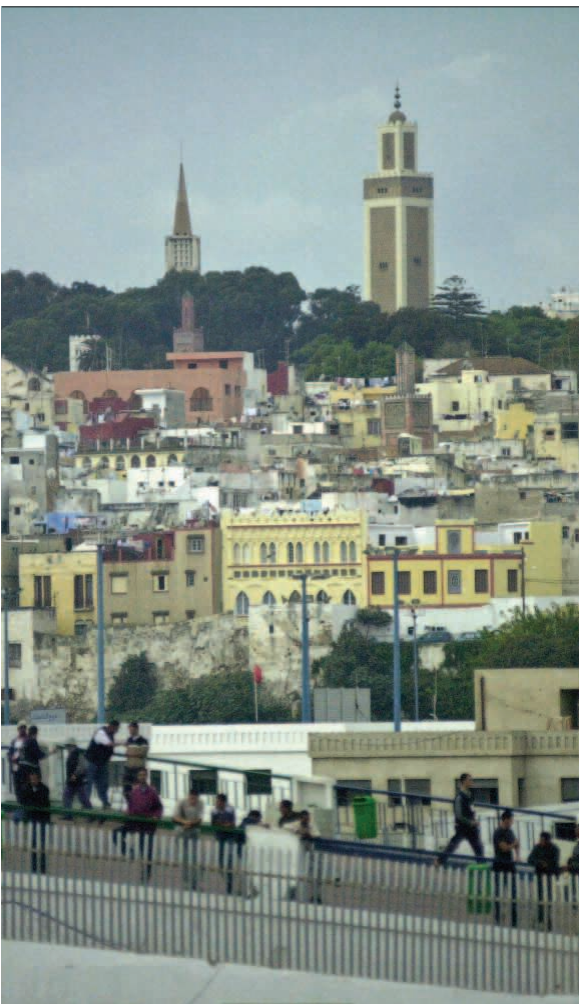
"No money!" one of the women in our group yelled in both English and German.

But they still trailed her like a pack of dogs in heat, almost stumbling over one another.

The most creative hawkler emerged at the end.

People

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PHOTOS BY SCOTT SCHONAUER/Stars and Stripes

walk up and down the ramp at the marina in Tangier, Morocco, as the city rises in the background.

an wearing a German soccer
and followed us taking photos
the first half of our trip. I
it he was part of our group.
fore we boarded the boat,
r man tried to sell us photos
otographer had inconspicuous
n of us.

at point, the lengths some

folks there to sell something didn't
surprise anyone in the group.

Love it or hate it, nobody could
argue that the 13-hour jaunt to north-
ern Africa wasn't memorable. For
those who had had enough, they
could find solace in the fact that
Spain was just a short boat ride
away.

One day in Tangier is probably
enough for most travelers — even
those who don't mind getting their
shoes dirty in the medina and shoo-
ing away incessant handicraft sales-
men like flies.

For others, one day might be too
much.

E-mail Scott Schonauer at:
schonauers@mail.estripes.osd.mil.



Above: A camel driver pulls on the rope to direct a camel to rise to its feet and give a German tourist a brief ride.



While not everybody's idea of what a belly dancer should look like, this Moroccan woman unselfconsciously entertains luncheon patrons at Restaurant Hammadi in Tangier. Lunch and the performance were included in the price of the tour.

Ski Clubs & Events

COMPILED BY
KAREN BRADBURY
Stars and Stripes

Add, correct or update a listing by sending information by e-mail to travel@mail.estripes.osd.mil or by faxing (+49) (6155-601-416).

Clubs

ITALY

AVIANO SKI CLUB

Area: Northern Italy

Web site: www.avianoskiclub.com
Telephone: 0434 366 185 (Gloria Leonardi, Vice President)

Membership fees: \$15 adults, \$5 children 7-17, under 6 free.

Trips: March 11-13, Molltaler Glacier, Austria, \$120.

GERMANY

FRANKFURT INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Telephone: 069-9720-3669

E-mail: info@fiscweb.org

Web site: www.fiscweb.org

Address: c/o Trevor Wolf, CMR 453, Box 939, APO AE 09074

Membership fees: 20 euros singles, 30 euros families.

Meetings: 7 p.m. every other Wednesday at The Fox and The Fiddle Pub and Music Hall, Bleichstrasse 46, Frankfurt.

Trips: March 10-13, Chamonix, France, 295 euros; March 11-13, Firms-Laax, Switzerland, 195 euros; March 18-20, Klosters, Switzerland, 255 euros; March 24-28, St. Moritz, Switzerland, 340 euros.

March 26-April 2, Val Thonon, France, 485 euros; April 1-3, St. Anton, Austria, 195 euros; April 8-10, Lech, Austria, 205 euros; April 14-17, Zermatt, Switzerland, 225 euros; April 22-24, Lech, Austria, 270 euros; June 16-19, Chiemsee, Germany, 285 euros; July 1-4, Sächsische Schweiz, Germany, 265 euros.

GRAFENWÖHR SKI AND SNOWBOARDING CLUB

Telephone: DSN 476-1560, or civilian 0964-1831560

E-mail: GRAFSKICLUB@hotmail.com

Membership fees: \$20/15 euros

Meetings: 7 p.m. on first and third Thursdays of each month in Italian Restaurant Da Lino in Grafenwöhr, Switzerland.

Trips: March 18-20, Zell am See, Austria, price TBA.

HEIDELBERG INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Telephone: 06202-577-8422 or 06221-57-5352, or DSN 370-5352

E-mail: president@heidelbergski.com

Web site: www.heidelbergski.com

Address: CMR 419 Box 909, APO AE 09102 or Postfach 105743, 69115 Heidelberg

Membership fees: \$30 for adults.

Meetings: 7 p.m. every other Wednesday at Hotel Zagreb in Schwyz, Switzerland.

Trips: March 18-20, Davos/Klosters, Switzerland, 245 euros; March 19-26, Tignes, France, 765 euros; April 1-3, Engelberg, Swit-



Courtesy of the Kitzbühel Tourist Office

Après-ski activities are one of the big draws at the resorts in Kitzbühel, Austria.

zerland, 285 euros; April 8-10, Airlberg, 210 euros; April 9-16, Val Thonon, France, (200-340 euros); April 25-May 1, Ischgl (220 euros); May 27-30, Bodensee (290 euros).

KAISERSLAUTERN SKI CLUB

Telephone: 06303-4751

E-mail: carper@msn.com

Web site: www.klownski.club.com

Address: Bob Carper, PSC 10, Box 825, APO AE 09142

Meetings: 7 p.m. on first and third Wednesday of the month at Kazabura Club, Vogelweh.

Trips: March 18-20, Lenzerheide, Switzerland, 210 euros; April 1-3, Verbier, Switzerland, 150 euros; April 22-24, Lech, Austria, 215 euros.

LABER SKI CLUB

Area: Southern Germany, Austria and northern Italy

Telephone: CIV 08822 9481 3100, DSN 440-2366

E-mail: President.Tim.Payne@nato.school.nato.int

Web site: www.natoschool.nato.int

Address: NATO Recreation Center, Labor Ski Club, Unit 24503, APO AE 09172

Trips: March 6, Seefeld, Austria; March 12, Ischgl, Austria; March 19-20, Passo Pordoi, Italy; April 2, Zugspitze, Germany.

MANNHEIM INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Area: Mannheim

Telephone: Janet-Anne Boykin at 06206-75269

E-mail: boykinjan@hotmail.com

Web site: fiskinfo.info

Membership fees: \$25 for singles, \$35 for families.

Meetings: Vierzehn Tönnis Club, March 3, 17, and 31, April 21.

Trips: March 11-13, Montafon, Austria, 130 euros; March 18-20, Verbier, Switzerland, 140 euros;

April 9-16, Meribel, France, price TBA.

ATCH SKI CLUB

Area: Stuttgart

Telephone: DSN 430-5789

E-mail: info@psc-ski.org

Web site: www.patcheski.club.org

Address: CMR 480, Box 198, APO AE 09128

Membership fees: \$30 singles, \$45 families.

Meetings: Patch Community Club at 7 p.m. Meeting dates: March 16 and 30, April 20 and May 4 & 21.

Trips: March 17-20, Chamonix, France, 390 euros; April 7-10, St. Moritz, Switzerland, 410 euros; April 9-16, Val Thonon, France, 320 euros; April 29-May 1, Ischgl, Austria, 220 euros; May 27-30, Lemnos, Austria, 200 euros; May 27-30, Sieg Golf I-St. Veit, Austria, 260 euros.

TANNENBAUM SKI CLUB

Area: Kaiserslautern Military Community, Eifel, Baumholder, Mannheim regions, Rheinland-Pfalz and Spangdahlem

E-mail: David Hanavan, dave@tannenbaumski.club.com

Telephone: 06301-3478

Web address: www.tannenbaumski.club.com

Address: c/o Rick Kane, Im Amstel 2, 67697 Otterberg, Germany

Membership fees: \$35 for singles, \$70 for families.

Meetings: First and third Wednesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. in Landstuhl Combined Community Club.

Trips: March 11-13, Firms-Laax, 185 euros; April 1-3, Engelberg, Switzerland, 200 euros; April 8-10, St. Anton, Austria, 165 euros; April 12-15, Ischgl, Austria, 205 euros.

WESTPALZ INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Area: Kaiserslautern Military Community

Web site: www.westpalzskiclub.org

Telephone: 06371-598537

E-mail: kdsowell@interquest.de

Address: PSC 1, Box 611, APO AE 09009

Meetings: 7 p.m. every other Wednesday at The Kneller Haus, Einsiedlerhof.

Trips: March 11-13, Zell am See, Austria, 220 euros; April 8-10, Lech, Austria, 220 euros; April 29-May 1, Ischgl, Austria, 215 euros.

WÜRZBURG INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Telephone: 0932 19244525

E-mail: wsiclub@hotmail.com

Web site: www.wsiclub.org

Address: WISC, CMR 475, Box 1, APO AE 09036

Membership fees: 25 euros for singles, 40 euros for families.

Meetings: 6 p.m. on first and third Wednesday of the month at Zum Kirschbaum Gasthaus on Würzburgstr. 18 in Rotendorf.

Check Web site for dates, directions and map.

Trips: March 14-20, St. Moritz, Switzerland, 400 euros; April 29-May 1, Ischgl, Austria, 230 euros; May 11-13, Landeck, Austria, price TBA; May 28-31, St. Veit, Austria, price TBA.

Outdoor Recreation

ITALY

VICENZA OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 12 and April 2, San Martino, Italy; March 19, Alleghe, Italy; March 26, Obereggen, Italy. Sign up the Sunday before. DSN 634-7453.

BAUMHOLDER 22nd BSB OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 11-13, Interlaken, Switzerland, \$125 per seat for transporta-

tion and ski or snowboard rental; hotel lodging \$25 per night; 2-day lift pass, 72 euros; March 17-20, Gstaad, Austria, two overnights, breakfasts, dinners and two days of skiing, adult \$199, child 6-12 \$179, under 5 \$69, \$30 single supplement. Ski lessons available for \$45 per person per day for 4 hours of lessons; snowboard lessons: \$59 per person per day for 6 hours of lessons. CIV 06163-51-6015 or DSN 322-6015

HANAU OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 17-20, Dolomiti Bellamonte, Italy, including transportation, two hotel overnights, breakfasts, dinners and two days of skiing, adult \$199, child 6-12 \$179, under 5 \$69, \$30 single supplement. Ski lessons available for \$45 per person per day for 4 hours of lessons; snowboard lessons: \$59 per person per day for 6 hours of lessons. CIV 06163-51-6015 or DSN 322-6015

KAISERSLAUTERN OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 18, express to Feldberg, Germany, \$45 adults, \$35 children; March 5 and 26, express to St. Anton, Austria, \$55 adults, \$45 children; March 11-13, Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland, \$169; March 12 and 23, express to Engelberg, Switzerland, \$55 adults, \$45 children; March 17-20, Zermatt, Switzerland, \$259; April 19, express to Jungfrau, Switzerland, \$55 adults, \$45 children; March 25-27, Firms-Laax, Switzerland, \$199, DSN 489-7751 or CIV 0631-5365-7751.

KATTERBACH OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 5, Zugspitze Glacier, \$30 for transportation and ski equipment; March 18-20, weekend ski in Austria, \$289 for transportation, ski equipment, two hotel overnights, breakfast, and lift tickets. DSN 467-3225 or CIV 09802-83-3225.

MANNHEIM OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 5 and 19, Feldberg, Germany, \$35 plus lift; March 12 and 26, April 2 and 10, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$50 plus lift; March 19, teen trip to Feldberg (\$25 plus lift). MOR's ski swap runs now to April 1; bring in equipment you no longer use or just come in and swap.

SPANGDAHLEM OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 11-13, Gstaad, Switzerland, \$265 dorms, \$344 doubles, 25 percent discount for children under 12; March 11-13, Black Forest, Feldberg, Germany, \$275 dorms, DSN 452-7177 or CIV 06565-61-7177.

STUTTGART OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 12 and 19, April 2, St. Gallenkirch, Austria, \$30 with equipment rental, \$15 without; April 10-17, St. Gallenkirch, Austria, \$590 adults, \$295 children. DSN 431-2774.

WIESBADEN OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 5, 12, and 19, Black Forest (Feldberg), \$45; March 9 and 23, ski maintenance clinic; March 11-13, ski trip to the U.S. Forest Service and Snowbird Championship in Garmaeh; March 18-20, heli-skiing in Switzerland; March 19-20, Feldberg, Germany, \$175; March 26, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$55. Call DSN 537-5760 (Wiesbaden Army Airfield) or DSN 334-5818 (Anderson Barracks, Dextheim).



Alpine snow conditions

as of February 27, 2005

Resort	Site	ON	OFF	Rests	Lifts
Kaiserslautern, AUS	220/45	Good	Packed	Hard	Open
Mauterhorn, AUS	150/40	Good	Varied	Hard	24/24
Neuhart, AUS	200/20	Excellent	Varied	Packed	19/24
Oberstdorf, AUS	250/80	Excellent	Powder	Good	27/27
Pfrontal, AUS	240/55	Excellent	Packed	Closed	7/7
St. Anton, AUS	280/35	Excellent	Varied	Good	83/83
Chubb, GER	300/75	Good	Varied	Varied	1/1
Garmisch/GER	280/45	Good	Varied	Good	23/27
Feldberg, GER	155/140	Excellent	Powder	Good	26/28
Cortina, IT	100/50	Good	Blown	Packed	46/47
Pizzo Tofana, IT	120/90	Good	Packed	Packed	18/18
Engadina, SW	275/95	Good	Powder	Good	25/25
Saia Fei, SW	248/52	Good	Packed	Hard	22/22
Valletta, SW	160/70	Excellent	Varied	Good	33/38
Zermatt, SW	232/161	Excellent	Varied	Excellent	35/35

General Information

*All measurements are in centimeters
Good skiing on well groomed pistes
New snow has improved the pistes
The best cond., based on upper slopes
The best cond., based on upper slopes
Very good piste cond., best at top
Great skiing on well groomed pistes
Best snow found above mid-station
Great conditions - was up your skis!
Great skiing due to the recent snowfall
Plenty of good snow at altitude
Very good piste cond., best at top
Great on piste cond., okay cond., off piste

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Apr 10 Wine festival • Spain • Spain • Hungary...
Apr 17 Cyprus • Cyprus military route • Italy, Italy
Apr 24 Holland • Morocco • Morocco tour offer
May 1 Costa Rica • Madrid • Portugal • Andalusia
May 8 Washington • Theater • Nottingham, England
May 15 Italy: Asolo, Venice, Michelangelo, Verona
May 22 Getting around bus, fly, rail, driving • Guides
May 29 Greek island hopping • Dour Cove • Wine fest
May 31 Outdoor: Sky Diving • Hike • Cycling • Bike
June 12 Monaco • Gibraltar • Portugal • London
June 18 Running of the bulls • San Fermi • Bullfighting
June 24 Running in Boston • Croatia, Bulgaria
July 9 Gr. Austria • Ireland • Venice • Reykjavik
July 16 Battle of Hastings • Channel Islands • Glasgow
July 17 Fr. Abbey • Spain • Germany • Poland
July 24 Prague • Fr. Amsterdam • Sweden • Salzburg
July 31 London Eye • Madrid • Battles by Bike • Wiking
Aug 7 McMillan/James • Switzerland • Turkey • Venice
Aug 14 Warsaw • Rome France • Prince Charles' residence
Aug 21 Ireland • French Riviera • Paris • Hungary
Aug 28 Asia • Turkey • Dinkelbach • Switzerland

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Mar 13 Italy • Naples • Sweden • Chile • Norway
Apr 1 Italy • Naples • Italy • Italy • Italy
Apr 8 Moscow by lake • sailing • Wales on horseback
Apr 15 Europe wide • Piedmont • springing • Port
Apr 22 Tuscany • Genua • Italy • Opera • Vinopolis
May 6 The new top 10 U.S. additions before others
May 18 Tuscany • Genua • Italy • Opera • Vinopolis
May 28 Monaco • Monaco • Italy • Koutenbach • wine
May 29 Normandy • 1-day sites for the 10th Anniversary
June 3 Vienna • Hungary • family travel • Olympic
June 10 Medieval • Germany • Ireland • England
June 17 Germany • Prague • Belgium • San Antonio
June 24 Spain • Madrid • Barcelona • Bologna
July 1 Paris by Seaway • St. Petersburg • Cuba
July 8 Germany • Western Europe • Berlin
July 15 London's duck tour • London fun
July 22 Windsor • London • Budapest's Children's Railway
July 29 Hampshire • Scotland wedding
Aug 5 Athens • Sargento • western Ireland by bike
Aug 12 Paris • Paris • Paris • budget
Aug 19 Milan • Italy • Hollywood • Seattle • Croatia
Aug 26 Athens' day in the sun
Sept 2 Hiking Hadrian's Wall • Bulgaria
Sept 18 Obedience • Saratoga, Germany
Sept 18 Athens • St. Hildegard • Germany • Frankfurt

Sept 28 Royal yacht • Glasgow capital of cool
Sept 30 Warsaw • Oktoberfest • fine wine villages
Oct 7 Spain • Basque region • Oldies • Portugal; reply
Oct 14 London family fun • Venice • Eastern Europe
Oct 21 Home to Norway • Stockholm on ice • Sweden
Oct 28 St. Europe 2005 • Snow forecast • Best resorts
Nov 4 Resorts • Small Family • French Alps
Nov 11 Times • Tallies • medieval & modern • Art, beer
Nov 18 Communities & museums home lost in the forest of the Bulge
Nov 25 Europe's Christmas market
Dec 2 Tangles • Monaco • Bingen • Germany
Dec 9 Whiskey tasting in Scotland and Croatia
Dec 16 Lithuania and Algiers, France
Dec 23 New Years throughout Europe and the Holy Land
Dec 30 Personalized Adventure travel • WWII sites
Jan 6 London in winter
Jan 13 Epiphany in Venice • Italy in Prague
Jan 20 Events in Europe 2005 • Visit in Madrid
Jan 27 Carnival season brings maddening mischief to Europe
LISTING of Europe-wide Carnival/Festivals events • Swiss masks
Feb 8 Grindelwald, Switz., is the sibling's postcard • Tiro, Italy
Town is part Italian part Swiss beautiful & easy ski runs
Feb 16 Pre-Valentine's day travel • Romance • Paris • Chocolate • Switzerland's Leash Lark/Lark/Lark • Asia, France
Feb 17 Dresden City bouquets back at it marks the 10th anniversary of its bombing in WWII • King Tut exhibit in Bonn • Germany Schloss Linderhof, King Ludwig's castle, final mortuary

Cours/Outdoors

By KAREN BRADY

Stars and Stripes

Send listings via e-mail at least two weeks ahead of the desired publication date to travel@mail.estripes.osd.mil. If you have questions, call (+49) 6155-60-268.

GERMANY

GIessen-284TH BSB OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 5. Wachtersbach ceramic factory and chicken farm restaurant, \$20 adults, \$15 children 4-11, \$5 under 3; **March 12.** Garnish overnight, \$18 adult, \$89 youth, \$49 child; **March 12.** Cologne, \$25 adult, \$20 youth, \$10 child; **March 19.** Dachau Concentration Camp and BMW Museum, \$49/39/19; **March 26.** Rothenburg tour, \$25/20/10. Call DSN 343-6282/8207 or CIV 0641-402-8202/8207.

HANAU OUTDOOR RECREATION AND LEISURE TRAVEL: March 12-13. Amsterdam nightlife trip, adults only, \$129. Call DSN 322-6015, CIV 06183-51-6015.

KAISERSLAUTERN OUTDOOR RECREATION: Feb. 26. Rothenburg, Germany, volleyball, \$40; **March 4-6.** Paris with optional cycling tour, prices start at \$179; **March 11.** after-work spa night, \$35; **March 17-20.** Prague, prices start at \$145; **March 27.** trout fishing, \$35. Call DSN 343-6282/8207 or CIV 0631-536-7751.

KATTERBACH OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 26. crystal shopping in Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic, \$45, passport required. "One-day-wonders" offer free transportation. Upcoming schedule: **March 10, March 23.** IKEA shopping outlet mall, \$20; **March 23.** IKEA shopping in Würzburg, \$31. Fortress Marianberg in Fuzbach. Advance sign-up required. Call DSN 467-3225 or CIV 09802-83-3225.

MANNHEIM OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 12 and 26, April 16 and 30. paintball play days, ODR paintball field, \$15 with own equipment, \$20 with own equipment; **April 23.** indoor climbing wall in Mannheim; **April 24.** Europa Amusement Park, \$30 for bus, plus park admission for 26 euros adult, 16 euros children 4-11. Call DSN 381-7215/7232 or CIV 0621-700-7215/7232.

RAMSTEIN (KMC) RIT DESTINATIONS UNLIMITED: March 10, 13, 17, 20, 23, 26, and April 3. Rhine castles cruise and wine tasting, \$82; **March 5.** Jailhouse Bash, entertainment in a 19th-century doctor's prison in Rüdesheim, including dinner and beverages, \$89, adults only; **March 11-13.** Prague and Karlovy Vary, one hotel night downtown with three meals and city tour, \$189; **March 19.** tour of Cochem Castle and knight's dinner, \$89; **March 19-20.** Brussels and Bruges with overnight in downtown hotel and city tours; **March 20.** "Mad" King Ludwig's Neuschwanstein and Linderhof castles with stop at Wieskirche church, \$99.

Flight tours from Frankfurt: **March 13-20.** Moscow and St. Petersburg, 1049 euros (flight, hotels, overnight train, admissions, tours and lunches); **April 8-15.** Egypt, 1189 euros (flight, hotels, tours, admissions, three-day Nile cruise); **April 19-26.** Beijing and Xian, China, including Great Wall, Forbidden City, Xi'an's Terra Cotta Warriors, 1399 euros for flight, tours, admissions, many meals; **June 23-July 3.** South Africa, including Kruger Park, Cape Town, flights, tours, admissions and many meals, 2169 euros; **Oct. 23-31.** Moscow and St. Petersburg, 999 euros (flight, hotels, train, admissions tours, and lunches); **Nov.**



A statue of Giuseppe Garibaldi stands on Rome's Gianicolo Hill. According to new published research, gold dug up by Italian immigrants in the 1849 California gold rush found its way to Garibaldi during his guerrilla war that resulted in the establishment of the Italian Kingdom of Italy.

5-12. The Golden Ring of Moscow, tours of ancient Russian towns, 1099 euros (flight, hotels, overnight train, admissions and 6 days of tours with full pension).

For all tours, contact DSN 480-6304/489-7054/496-7719, or visit www.RITTravel.com.

WIESBADEN OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 6. ice skating in Frankfurt; **March 6 and 19.** fishing in Limburg; **March 8, 22, and 29.** bouldering in Nieder Oim; **March 10, 13, 17, 24 and 31.** swimming in Frankfurt; **March 27.** trout fishing in Limburg. Call DSN 337-5760 (Wiesbaden Army Airfield) or DSN 334-5818 (Anderson Barracks, Dexheim).

USO KAISERSLAUTERN: March 5. city tour and shopping in Lucerne, Switzerland, \$89 adult, \$79 child; **March 5.** Nuremberg and the Third Reich, \$69; **March 5.** Easter egg market in Michelstadt, \$49 museum and count's castle, \$59 adults, \$49 child; **March 5.** Paris city tour, \$99 adults, \$85 children; **March 5.** Trier city tour, \$49 adults, \$45 children; **March 12.** Cochem Castle tour and wine tasting, \$55 adult, \$45 child; **March 12.** German train orientation and trip to Speyer with city tour, Technik Museum and IMAX Theater, \$39 adult, \$35 child; **March 12.** Mastricht, Holland, city tour, \$59 adults, \$55 child; **March 20.** theatre in Frankfurt, "The Complete History of America (Abridged)"; **April 7-11.** two nights in London, \$449 adults, \$429 children, single supplement \$160; **April 12-17.** Italian Spring Film: Rome, Pompeii, Sorrento, Capri, Pisa and Florence, \$699 adults, \$679 children, single supplement \$195; **April 23-24.** Holland overnight including Keukenhof Gardens, flower parade and Delft, \$249 adults, \$229 children, single supplement \$35.

Contact the USO at Vogelweh, DSN 489-6033, CIV 0631-536-4033; Ramstein DSN 480-6326, CIV 06371-42623; Landsleit DSN 486-8241, CIV 06371-63463; Kleber Kaserne, DSN 483-7337, CIV 0631-46237, Pulasik Barracks, DSN 489-7233, CIV 0631-536-7233, Tours Office phone: DSN 489-7640, CIV 0631-536-7640.

USO REINH-KECK (Darmstadt-Heidelberg-Mannheim): March 6. Michelstadt Easter egg market, \$29; **March 8.** Worms orientation by tram; \$10; **March**

8. Mannheim orientation, \$5; **March 10.** Speyer orientation, \$10; **March 11.** shopping in Nove, Italy, for china, pottery and gift items, \$99; **March 12.** CeBIT Expo in



Hannover (telecommunications trade show), \$60; **March 12.** Strasbourg sightseeing, \$49; **March 15.** Weinheim orientation, \$10; **March 18.** Evelin's Wellness Spa with body draining wrap, \$29 transportation, 105 euros for procedure; **March 19.** Paris experience, \$84 adults, \$60 children under 11; **March 20.** Luisenpark, \$5; **March 20.** Garssella Theme, Baden-Baden; \$39; **March 24-29.** Rome for Easter including city tour of Florence, Rome's Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, The Forum and Colosseum, and visit to Pisa, \$549 adults, \$529 children includes bus and guided tours; single supplement \$100. Contact USO Darmstadt at DSN 348-7918; USO Heidelberg at DSN 370-7924; or USO Mannheim at DSN 385-3195.

Italy

USO NAPLES: April 9-15. Greece by bus with visits to Athens, Ioannina, Meteora, Delphi, Corinth, Epidauros and Mycenae; adults \$98 euros; May 20-26, Egypt, price TBA. One-hour tours are also available. Call DSN 626-5713 or visit www.uso.naples.

USO ROME offers regular tours, including: Roman Holiday, a four-day tour with three nights in a three-star hotel, **Sundays through Wednesdays** (includes four meals and free guided tours), 39 per person; papal audience, **every Wednesday** (free); Super City Tour (Pantheon, Trevi Fountain and Spanish Steps), **two days a week**; Romewalk, a 3-hour walking tour, **two times a week**; Vatican City, **six days a week**; visit the ancient Christian catacombs below Rome and St. Paul's, **twice a week**; van and walking tour of the Colosseum with a walk through the Roman Forum, **four days a week**; Rome After Dark, **7 p.m. Friday and Saturday**; Monuments of Rome **seven days a week**; Ancient Rome, **seven days a week**; Christian Rome catcombs, **seven days a week**; Illuminated Rome, **seven days a week**; Naples, Capri and Sorrento day tour, **every day**; Trivoli tour, **four times a week**. Call (+39) (0) 6-86-4232 or check www.uso.it for prices and times.

Week's best bets

BELGIUM: Stavell's Blancs Mousis take to the streets again during the annual Laetare (mid-Lent) festival. History has it that in medieval times the locals got a bit carried away with their merriment in the streets, so the abbey issued an edict forbidding music, theater, drinking, dancing — anything that was fun. In retaliation, the townspeople designed mock costumes that included masks with long red turned-up noses. In the years that followed, the monks loosened up about the whole whittens-and-Blancs Mousis have become the symbol of the town with a festival every year. The biggest day is Sunday with a grand parade of 2,000 participants beginning at 1:30 p.m. The Blancs Mousis gather at the place Saint-Remacle at 5:30 p.m. and at 6 p.m. fireworks fill the skies. The entrance fee is 3 euros and entitles you, according to the Web site, to drink beer, be hit on the head with herrings swung on strings and be covered in a rain of confetti. Such fun!

ENGLAND: If you're a diver, head to London this weekend for the country's biggest diving show at Excel Docklands. You'll find leading suppliers of diving equipment, diving holidays, training opportunities, fashions and boats. About 320 exhibitors, in-hall pools and dozens of speakers — with topics such as digital photography, great white sharks and the HMS Victoria wreck — are on the program. The show is open Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets cost 9.50 pounds (about \$19) for adults, 2 pounds for children up to 12 years. For more information, go to www.diveshows.co.uk.

GERMANY: This weekend Nuremberg's fairgrounds will hold 15,000 square meters of motorbikes during Bikers' World, the first exhibition of its kind in the country. On the program are exhibitions, rides, motorcycle shows, photographs and interviews, a super stunt-riding show, youth motorcycles sports with ADAC, trial shows with motorbikes with electric drive, pocket bike demonstrations, riding demonstrations, sound checks and a family-friendly auction on Saturday will feature motorcycles ranging from the '20s to the '90s. The show is open both days 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets cost 9 euros for adults, 5.50 euros for children 6 to 14 and 2.10 euros for 12 euros for a family ticket. For more details, go to <http://bikers.world.afag.de>.

NETHERLANDS: More than 200 international art and antiques dealers will be converging on Maastricht tomorrow for the beginning of the annual European Fine Art Fair. It runs until March 13 in the Maastricht Exposition Congress Centre. The promoters say it's the world's leading fair for decorative art objects and antiques. Specialist areas include Paintings, Drawings and Prints, Antiques and Works of Art, 20th-century Art, Classical Antiquities and Egyptian Works of Art; Illuminated Manuscripts; Rare Books and Maps; and La Haute Joaillerie du Monde (jewelry design). The show is open daily 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets cost 6 p.m.). Tickets cost 35 euros for adults, 7.50 euros for children 12 to 18 and free for those under 12. For details, go to www.tefaf.com.

SWITZERLAND: "One hundred years of motorizing progress" is the theme of this year's Geneva car show, one of the premiere shows in Europe. Check out the newest in eight categories: motor cars with three, four or more wheels; electrical and alternative drive cars; special bodywork for cars; design and engineering; converted cars; accessories and components for motor cars; OEM: original equipment manufacturers; workshop installations for the repair and maintenance of cars; and miscellaneous products and services relating to the car industry. Animation and other attractions also are on the list. The show is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., weekends 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tickets cost 12 Swiss francs for adults, 7 Swiss francs for children 6 to 16 and 70 Swiss francs for a season ticket. For details, go to www.salon-auto.ch/en.

— JAYNE TRAENDLY

Volksmarch

Many long-distance walkers have been looking forward to this weekend because it's the start of the German marathon season.

The Rheinland-Pfalz town of Rhaunen kicks off the marathons again this year. It's in the Hunsrück region and lies north of Idar-Oberstein. Expect to encounter extremely varied temperatures as you ascend and descend the hills in this region, so dress warmly and in layers, especially with our crazy, cold and wet weather these days.

One of the longest and "muckiest" long-distance walks I've ever completed was in Rhaunen. However, I'll take a hilly course over a flat one any day.

This 42-kilometer trail begins both days between 7 and 9 a.m. and marchers can receive the traditional patch and certificate (4.70 euros) for completing it. Additionally, 6-, 10- and 20-kilometer paths will be offered on Saturday and Sunday between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m., and a torch walk will be held Saturday between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. Even though no distance is listed for the torch walk, there is only one hour allocated to walk the trail between the last start time and the 8 p.m. finish time, so I'm guessing the torch walk is only for the 6K course.

You can reach the Idarwald-Halle start location in Rhaunen via either B50 or B41. If you opt for B50, take the Sohren exit and follow the signs towards Gosenroth and Rhaunen. If you're heading to the town by way of B41, take it until you reach Kim, and then follow the signs to Hahnenbach and Rhaunen.

Then sit down with the calendar below and plan to attend more marathons this Volksmarch season. These are German long-distance walks included in the 2005 Deutsche Volkssportverband e.V. Terminliste (subject to change). Unless otherwise noted, each walk is 42 kilometers long. Happy marathoning!

E-mail Jennifer West at volksmarch@mail.estrupes.osd.mil. Write her at Volksmarch Column, Stars and Stripes, Bldg 2899, Pulaski Barracks, APO AE 09227-3171 (MPS).

Jennifer West



Listings come from brochures of IVV-sanctioned events that were either collected at volksmarches or mailed to Jennifer West by clubs wishing to promote their events. Locations are noted in the host language whenever possible. More extensive lists are available in the IVV or DUV-VHV Terminliste.

Country/Town	Day(s) and Time(s)	Code	Km.	Starting Point	Award	Directional Reference
Denmark						
Alleerd	Sun 0900-1100	-	11 & 20	Skovvangskolen	No award	NW of Birkedal
Grindsted	Sat 0900-1200	-	7	Søndre skole	No award	NW of Kolding
Grindsted	Sat 0900-1100	-	13	Søndre skole	No award	NW of Kolding
Grindsted	Sat 0900-1100	-	20	Søndre skole	No award	NW of Kolding
Ring	Sat 0900-1100	-	5 & 12	Nordagerskolen	No award	SE of Odense
Ribe	Sat 0900-1100	-	19	Nordagerskolen	No award	SE of Odense
Tombø	Sun 0900-1100	-	5, 8 & 13	Skole	No award	N of Hjørring
Tombø	Sun 0900-1100	-	17 & 22	Skole	No award	N of Hjørring
France						
Gries	Sun 0800-1400	F	10 & 20	Espace Loisirs La Ferté	No award	S of Haguenau
Mondelange	Sun 0700-1400	F	10	Gymnase M. Cordon	No award	N of Metz
Mondelange	Sun 0700-1400	F	20	Gymnase M. Cordon	No award	N of Metz
Mulhouse	Sat & Sun 0700-1400	F	10 & 20	11 rue du Cercle	No award	SW of Freiburg, GE
Neufgrange	Sat & Sun 0700-1400	F	10	Gymnase	No award	S of Sarreguemines
Neufgrange	Sat & Sun 0700-1400	F	20	Gymnase	No award	S of Sarreguemines
Wimshaus	Sun 0700-1400	F	10 & 20	Salle Polyvalente	No award	NW of Haguenau
Germany						
Dettingen/Elm	Sat 0800-1330, Sun 0700-1300	F	6 & 11	Festhalle	Lantern	BWS, N of Memmingen
Ilmmünster	Sun 0700-1500, Sun 0700-1200	BFX	6 & 12	Vereinsheim	B-medal	MOR, S of Pfaffenhofen
Ilmmünster	Sat 0700-1300, Sun 0700-1200	BFX	20	Vereinsheim	B-medal	MOR, S of Pfaffenhofen
Ludwig-Plingewitz	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	BFX	5, 10, 20	Gemeinschaftshaus	Porcelain egg	BWS, S of Pfaffenhofen
Mühlhausen/Enz	Sat 0700-1500, Sun 0700-1200	BFX	5 & 10	Enzthalhalle	B-medal	MOR, NE of Pforzheim
Mühlhausen/Enz	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	BFX	20	Enzthalhalle	B-medal	BWN, NE of Pforzheim
Oberbach	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	BFX	6 & 10	Volkshaus	SAR, NE of Saarbrücken	RIP, N of Idar-Oberstein
Rhaunen/Hunsrück	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	BFX	6, 10, 20	Idarwald-Halle	Hut	RIP, N of Idar-Oberstein
Rhaunen/Hunsrück	Sat & Sun 0700-0900	M	42	Idarwald-Halle	Pat	RIP, N of Idar-Oberstein
Schneifeld	Sat 1730-1830	BFTX	6	Idarwald-Halle	Pat	RIP, N of Idar-Oberstein
Schneifeld	Sat 1800-1900, Sun 0700-1300	F	7 & 11	Festhalle	Stuffed elephants	RIP, N of Idar-Oberstein
Tiefenbach	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	BFX	5, 10, 20	Mießbachwehne	Heart candle	HE, SE of Weitzlar
Wiesbach	Sat 0730-1400, Sun 0700-1200	FN	5 & 10	Wiesbachhalle	No award	SAR, N of Saarbrücken
Wiesbach	Sat 0730-1400, Sun 0700-1200	FN	15	Wiesbachhalle	No award	SAR, N of Saarbrücken
Wurmlingen	Sat 0730-1300, Sun 0700-1300	FY	6 & 10	Schönschule	Model semi truck	BWS, NW of Tullingen
Italy						
Cecchii di Piasano	Sun 0830-0930	FX	7 & 14	Central Piazza	Plant (1st 250)	SW of Pordenone
Torreglia	Sun 0830-0930	F	8 & 14	See misc. notes	No award	W of Padova
Torreglia	Sun 0830-0930	F	20 & 33	See misc. notes	No award	W of Padova
Torreglia	Sun 0730-0830	M	42	See misc. notes	No award	W of Padova
Luxembourg						
Eitelbruck	Sun 0700-1400	F	6	No award	Lycée Technique	SW of Bitburg, GE
Eitelbruck	Sun 0700-1300	F	12	No award	Lycée Technique	SW of Bitburg, GE
Netherlands						
Schinveld	Sun 0700-1400	-	7 & 14	Café Cambrinus	Slicker	N of Brunssum
Schinveld	Sun 0700-1200	-	21, 28, 35	Café Cambrinus	Slicker	N of Brunssum
United Kingdom						
Royston	Sun 0900	-	10 & 20	Warren Car Park	No award	SW of Cambridge

B - Awards from past events available (B-medal)

Bring a cup for free refreshments at the start points

D - Shower/Wash facilities at start hall

F - Free refreshment at start points

GENERAL CODES

M - Marathon or long-distance event

N - Nordic walking event

P - Arctic at start hall

S - Stroller-friendly trails

s - Shorter trail noted as stroller-friendly

T - Night walk, carry a flashlight

X - Award available while supply lasts

W - Course suitable for wheelchairs

Y - Young Walkers - Run or Barge, 6-14 years

2.9 - Reduced price of 2.90 euros for start card & certificate

3.5 - Reduced price of 3.50 euros for start card & B-medal

UPCOMING 2005 MARATHON EVENTS IN GERMANY

MARCH
 Idar-Oberstein (SAR), March 5
 Dorsten-Holsterhausen (NRW), March 12 (50K also)
 Borken/Fargen-Enkheim (HE), March 19-20
 Wuppertal-Ronsdorf (NRW), March 26
 Kitz-Sulzbach (RP), March 26-27
 Fürstenstein (NDB), March 28

APRIL
 Hahnenbach (RP), April 2-3 (50K also)
 Pöndorf (RP), April 16-17
 Nalphen-Deuz (NRW), April 23
 Buren-Anden (NRW), April 24
 Glauchau (THS), April 24
 Mölin (SHH), April 30
 Bockenau (RP), April 30
 Bliestalbach (SAR), April 30

MAY
 Bockenau (RP), May 1
 Montabaur (RP), May 5
 Ramsden (RP), May 7
 Buchholz (THS), May 14
 Gräfnau-Angstedt (THS), May 15
 Bockelheim am Main (NDB), May 16
 Waging am See (MOB), May 21
 Boklund & Stroudorf (SHH), May 28

JUNE
 Bensheim (HE), June 4-5
 Bad Kreuznach (RP), June 18-19
 Fehrl-Ritzhausen (Hot/Westerwald), June 19-20
 Dörriesberg-Wertheim (BWN), June 19
 Hühn-Krausbach (NRW), June 25-26 (50K also)
 Schömberg-Langenbrand (BWS), June 25-26 (50K also)

JULY
 Idar-Oberstein (Weierbach) (RP), July 2-3
 Darmstadt (HE), July 2-3
 Ties-Neustadt (BWS), July 9-10 (50K also)
 Gräfnau-Angstedt (THS), July 23
 Fischbach (MOB), July 24 (50K also)

AUGUST
 Eberhahn (RP), Aug. 6-7 (50K also)
 Dorn (BWN), Aug. 6-7
 Immersheim (MOB), Aug. 6-7 (50K also)
 Verwegen (NRW), Aug. 13
 Recklinghausen (NRW), Aug. 14
 Cralheim (BWN), Aug. 20-21
 Lauf (BWS), Aug. 20-21

SEPTEMBER
 Lütjensee (SHH), Sep. 3
 Dettlebach-Küzingen (FRU), Sep. 4
 Ganderkesee (NDS), Sep. 10
 Mönchengladbach-Hard (NRW), Sep. 10-11
 Enshaim (SAR), Sep. 10-11
 Heideberg (BWN), Sep. 10-11
 Oberasbach (FRM), Sep. 17-18 (50K also)
 Grosssallingen (SCH), Sep. 24-25 (50K also)

OCTOBER
 Fulda (HE), Oct. 1
 Berschweiler (SAR), Oct. 2-3
 Otterberg (RP), Oct. 15-16
 Reiter (RP), Oct. 15-16
 Primmal (SAR), Oct. 15-16
 Hachenberg (RP), Oct. 22-23
 Aarbergen-Daisbach (HE), Oct. 22-23
 Enzweihingen (BWN), Oct. 22 (50K also)
 Koblenz (RP), Oct. 29-30 (50K also)

NOVEMBER
 Beilheim-Disching (BWN), Nov. 1
 Bad Sobernheim (RP), Nov. 5-6

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Calendar

COMPILED BY
JAYNE TRAENDLY

Special to Stars and Stripes

Listings are the latest information available at press time, but are subject to change. We recommend that you check with the local tourist board to confirm details of the event before traveling.

AUSTRIA

www.austria-info.at

VIENNA: Johann Strauss ball, **March 19**.
VIENNA: Dream on ice, **through March 6**. Ice skating in front of the City Hall.
INNERKREMS: Dog sled races, European championship, **March 11-13**.
VIENNA: Easter market, **March 12-23**. Castle Schönbrunn Hall: Easter festival, **March 14, 19, 24-25**.
VIENNA: OsterKlang Festival, **March 18-28**.
SALZBURG: Easter festival, **March 19-28**.

BELGIUM

www.visitbelgium.com

BRUSSELS: Book fair, **through March 6**.
STAVELOT: Mid-Lent carnival, **March 6**.
BRUSSELS: Festival of fantastic film, **March 11-26**.
BRUSSELS: Mini-Europe open, **March 19-July 9**.
THROUGHOUT the country: Flanders festival, **March 22-Oct. 23**.
TOURNAI: Flower market, **March 25**.
GHENT: Florales, **April 15-24**.

CZECH REPUBLIC

www.visitczechia.cz

PRAGUE: Easter markets, **March 19-April 8**. Old Town and Wenceslas Squares.
PRAGUE: Accordion festival, **April 8-12**.
BLANSKO: The eighth historical and beer fare celebrations, to mark Blansko's centenary (includes concerts, sword fights and historical market), **May**.

ENGLAND

www.visitbritain.com

LONDON: International dive show, **March 5-6**. ExCel Docklands.
BIRMINGHAM: Crufts dog show, **March 10-13**. NEC.
LONDON: ClassicLive, **March 18-23**. Classical music and instruments exhibit, Olympia.
LONDON: Boat race, **March 27**.
LONDON: Stitch 2005, **March 31-April 3**. Needcrafts, Olympia.
BIRMINGHAM: Go Fishing, **April 1-3**. Angling fair.
IPSWICH: Railway Modelers Association Open Day, **April 2**.
LONDON: Olympia music fair, **April 2**. Olympia.
LONDON: Festival of railway modeling, **April 2-3**. Alexandra Palace.
ST. ALBANS: International Napoleonic fair, **April 3**.
LONDON: Sounds exo - sound design, software and music technology exhibit, **April 14-16**. Wembley Exhibition Centre.



People walk under a copy of a painting by a Polish artist Aleksander Gieryski titled "Altana" hanging on the wall of the National Museum in Warsaw, Poland, last week.

LONDON: Flora London Marathon, **April 17**.

FRANCE

www.francel tourism.com
MARSEILLE: Carnival, Bouches du Rhône, **March 19**.
METZ: Flea market, **April 2, 16; May 7, 21**. 6 a.m.-1 p.m.
PARIS: City marathon, **April 10**.
CANNES: International film festival, **May 11-22**.

GERMANY

www.germany-tourism.de
MUNICH: Strong beer season, **through March 20**. Löwenbräu Keller.
MICHELSTADT: Easter egg market, **March 5-6**.
NÜRNBERG: Bikers World, **March 5-6**.
HANNOVER: CeBit, **March 10-16**. Computer fair.
HAMBURG: Dom, **March 18-April 17**. Carnival.
HEIDELBERG: Long night of the museums, **March 19**.
STUTTGART: Long night of the museums, **March 19**.
NÜRNBERG: Easter market, **March 11-28**.
NEULANSBACH (Hessenpark): Easter egg market, **March 19-20**.
BENSHEIM: Irish music festival, **March 20**.
HEIDELBERG: Spring festival, **April**

1-30.
BERLIN: Late shopping, **April 2**.
NÜRNBERG: City marathon, **April 24**.

HUNGARY

www.hungarytourism.hu
BUDAPEST: Spring festival, **March 19-April 4**.
HOLLOKO: Easter festival, **March 27-28**.

IRELAND

www.travel.ie
DUBLIN: St. Patrick's Day festival, **March 16-20**.

ITALY

www.italiantourism.com
ROME: City marathon, **March 13**.
FLORENCE: Explosion of the cart, medieval ritual, **March 27**.
VENICE: Su e Zo per i Ponti, **March 27**.
VENICE: St. Mark's Day, **April 25**.

THE NETHERLANDS

www.holland.com/uk
AMSTERDAM: Hissva, **through March 6**. Water sports fair.
MAASTRICHT: European fine arts fair, **through March 13**.
ROTTERDAM: City marathon, **April 10**.

Let's Go

BY JAYNE TRAENDLY

Stars and Stripes

Arts and crafts

Did you know that "arts and crafts" has a history? According to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Arts and Crafts was a movement and a style that began in England in the 1800s as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution.

It was led by John Ruskin and William Morris and promoted the idea of craftsmanship, individualism and the integration of art into everyday life. It also influenced industrial design. Spreading worldwide, it eventually led to a revival of nationalism after when craftspeople returned to their roots for inspiration.

The museum will host a major exhibition March 17 to July 24 that explores this movement and its impact today. More than 300 objects will be on display, including textiles, stained-glass, furniture, ceramics, metalwork, jewelry, books, architecture, photography, painting and sculpture. Four room sets — two British, one American and one Japanese — will show the importance of the Arts and Crafts home and interior.

Admission is 10 pounds (about \$19) for adults, 6 pounds for children 12 to 17 years old. Family rates are available.

The museum recommends reserving tickets in advance as it is timed admission. For details, call (+44) (0) 870 906 3883 or go to www.vam.ac.uk.

Military freebies

Some amusement parks and attractions in the Sunshine State are offering special deals and freebies for service members and their families, so if you're going back on leave, you might want to take advantage of them.

Anheuser-Busch, for example, has a "Heroes Salute" special throughout the year that offers free single-day admission to its Sea World and Busch Garden parks to active duty military, active reservists, U.S. Coast Guard, National Guardsmen and up to three dependents. Go to www.herosalute.com for locations.

The Seminole Tribe's Big Cypress Reservation in the Florida Everglades is offering military deals at the Ah-Tha-Thi-Ki Museum and the Billie Swamp Safari. The museum is centered on the culture and heritage of the Seminoles. The Billie Swamp is a wildlife park where you can take an airboat or swamp buggy tour through the area to learn about Seminole life. Overnight packages can be arranged.

Active military and their families receive get in free, and inactive and retired military and their families get 50-percent off admission. For details, go to www.seminoletribe.com or www.seminoletribe.com.

The St. Augustine (Fla.) Lighthouse & Museum, a working lighthouse and maritime museum, admits military personnel and their families free. Visit them on the Web at www.staugustinelighthouse.com.

SCOTLAND

www.visitscotland.com
GLASGOW: International comedy festival, **March 10-26**.
EDINBURGH: Easter festival, **March 24-28**.
HAWICK: Borders: Reivers festival, **March 25-27**. Historical festival.

SPAIN

www.tourspain.co.uk
VALENCIA: Las Fallas, **March 14-19**.
THROUGHOUT the country: Holy Week, **March 20-27**.
SEVILLE: Spring fair, **April 12-17**.
BARCELONA: City marathon, **April 20**.

SWITZERLAND

www.switzerlandtourism.ch
LA TCHOUX: Carnival, **March 11-13**.
EVIAN-LES-BAINS: Cross-country marathon, **March 13**.
GENEVA: International car show, **through March 13**.
BERN: Museum night, **March 18**.
LUCERNE: Easter festival, **March 12-20**.
GENEVA: Hot-air balloon festival, **March 17-20**.

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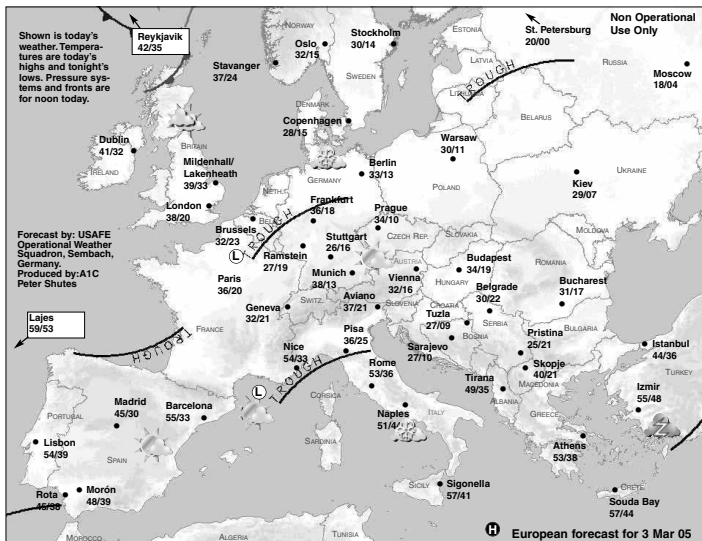
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EUROPEAN FORECAST

BeneLux: Cloudy with snow showers. Highs in the 30s. Friday lows in the low teens to low 20s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 30s to low 40s. Friday lows in the lower 20s to the lower 30s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Mostly cloudy. Highs in the 20s. Friday lows in the upper single digits to low teens.

France: Mostly cloudy with rain and snow showers. Highs in the north in the 30s. Highs in the south in the mid-50s. Friday lows in the lower 20s to lower 30s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy with snow showers to the far north. Highs in the lower to upper 30s. Friday lows in the teens.

Hungary: Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid-30s. Friday lows in the teens.

Northern Italy: Mostly cloudy with isolated snow showers. Highs in the upper 30s. Friday lows in the low to mid-20s.

Southern Germany: Partly cloudy. Highs in the 50s. Friday lows in the upper 30s to mid-40s.

Kosovo: Mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid-20s. Friday lows in the upper teens to lower 20s.

Norway: Partly cloudy with isolated rain showers. Highs in the 30s. Friday lows in the mid-teens to mid-20s.

Portugal, Spain: Partly cloudy with isolated rain showers in the south. Highs in the mid-40s to mid-50s. Friday lows in the 30s.

Turkey: Cloudy with isolated rain showers except isolated thunderstorms to the east. Highs in the mid-40s mid-50s in the north and west with low 70s in the south. Friday lows in the upper 30s to low 40s in the north and west with lower 50s in the south. Inland high temperatures will be in the upper 30s along with a rain/snow mix. Friday lows in the lower 30s.



AFRICA

Capetown	78	60	Mogadishu	91	73
Dakar	78	64	Nairobi	72	52
Freeport	89	71	Rabat	69	47
Khartoum	89	72	Tripoli	66	50

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	32	11	Manila	90	71
Bahrein	73	58	Mexico City	81	73
Beijing	40	19	Montreal	30	14
Bombay	89	72	San Jose	80	56
Buenos Aires	66	55	San Juan	80	56
Buenos Aires	66	55	Sao Paulo	80	56
Calcutta	89	72	Singapore	80	56
Chennai	89	72	Singapore	80	56
Chongqing	89	72	Singapore	80	56
Chongqing	89	72	Singapore	80	56
Chongqing	89	72	Singapore	80	56

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Alaska	78	60	Cleveland	25	18
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
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Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23

Alaska	78	60	Cleveland	25	18
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
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Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23

Alaska	78	60	Cleveland	25	18
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
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Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23

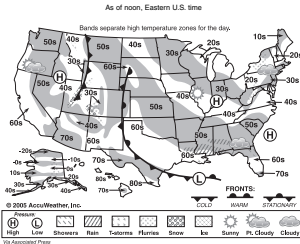
Alaska	78	60	Cleveland	25	18
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
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Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23
Alaska	78	60	Columbia	30	23

SUN & MOON

Sunrise (Baghdad)	7:05A	Tuesday	7:05A	Tomorrow	7:05A
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	6:25A	Wednesday	6:25A	Wednesday	6:25A
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	6:11P	Wednesday	6:11P	Wednesday	6:11P
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	6:02P	Wednesday	6:02P	Wednesday	6:02P



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AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/>

FACES



Keni Thomas and his band Cornbread performs Jan. 21 in Columbus, Ga. A former Army Ranger who survived a harrowing firefight in Somalia, Thomas realized that, as a singer, holding a microphone could be more important than holding a weapon.

Soldiering on to Nashville

Former Ranger Keni Thomas took long way to country music

BY BRAD BARNES
Knight Ridder Newspapers

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Keni Thomas has got this brown T-shirt he wears these days, with the word "Nashville" stamped across the chest.

It's a shirt the singer-songwriter probably wouldn't have pulled on two years ago, unless he was going for irony. His records have always been more Mellecamp than Merle.

Look at a recent Radio & Records country airplay chart, though, and you'll find a curious thing. There at No. 41 — right between songs by Tracy Byrd and Trent Willmon, and just a few down from Shania Twain and Alison Krauss — is a song called "Not Me," recorded by one Keni Thomas. The song features vocal support from country royalty Emmylou Harris and Vince Gill.

Now, music lovers can find the new album that spawned the song, Thomas' "Flags of Our Fathers," in country bins.

It's a deeply personal album. Some of its 10 songs are drawn from his days as a U.S. Army Ranger, including the harrowing Somalia firefight he survived.

The CD is also undeniably a country music record.

Thomas had never considered pursuing a country music career. "It's just funny that somewhere down the road, I end up there," says Thomas.

"The beauty of putting mileage on your life is you can always look back and you can see, you know, where you were supposed to be," he says. "I mean, how many things had to happen to bump me on the road to Nashville?"

Thomas got his start in the band Cornbread, a collaborative effort from four Columbus, Ga., musicians. As original members left, Thomas began replacing them with solid players who didn't have much voice in band decisions or writing. Eventually, Cornbread simply meant Keni Thomas and his tight set of players, often based in Atlanta.

The band created a bit of a buzz with a video filmed in Columbus in 1999. The next year, a single called "Mona Lisa's Smile" was well-received on college stations.

The band soldiered on, and two big breaks came in 2002. First, they scored the opening set for country bad boys Montgomery Gentry, who came out of their bus early to catch Cornbread's set and liked what they heard. Thomas hit it off with the duo, who would later make important introductions in

Nashville.

Later that year, the band was chosen as the local band featured in the movie "Sweet Home Alabama," which starred Reese Witherspoon. The exposure was great, but Thomas was crushed when no Cornbread song ended up on the film's soundtrack.

He began spending half his weeks in Nashville, pairing up with other songwriters to hone his craft and mingle.

Among those he met was producer Brent Maher, who was well-known on Music Row. One of the acts Maher had discovered was a set of mother-daughter singers by the name of Naomi and Wynonna Judd.

Maheir liked Thomas' writing and signed him to a three-year publishing deal.

But he was also intrigued by the charismatic songwriter's military backstory.

Thomas, too, found himself thinking about his days as a Ranger more and more. At age 38, he was losing his patience with his music career's slow progress.

He decided to pack up his cowboy boots and pull on his old combat boots. He accepted a job that would take him to Iraq as a security guard in Ridley Scott's movie of the same name.

His bandmates and friends tried to talk him out of it. It was dangerous, and his career was gaining momentum, they said. He told them it would just be for a few months.

That's when the phone rang, and the voice on the other end was from someone Thomas hadn't heard in about a year.

It was Jeff Strucker, who was a fellow sergeant trapped with him during that nightmarish firefight in Somalia — the event detailed in Mark Bowden's "Black Hawk Down," and later in Ridley Scott's movie of the same name.

"Hey, Keni, I hear you were thinking about heading over there to Iraq," said Strucker, who's now a chaplain.

"I'm going to tell you, you shouldn't go," Strucker said. "I mean, it's an important job. But whether you know it or not, you're kind of the voice of the Rangers right now. ... And your music means something to the guys."

Thomas realized that holding a microphone could be more important than holding a weapon.

Thomas has written songs that dealt with his past. The most autobiographical was one called "Fight I Couldn't Win," in which Thomas wrote, "I ran over to help my friend I tried to keep the life inside of him/That's a fight I couldn't win."

"I'm a songwriter and a performer," he says. "And what means something to me — I'm now able to get that message across."

Winfrey snags Oscar winner

It's not always easy to cast an Oscar winner in a TV role, but Oprah Winfrey did just that for "Their Eyes Were Watching God."

Although they're friends, Winfrey said she was "a little nervous" about asking Halle Berry to star in the film because she had won an Oscar for "Monster's Ball."

"I didn't know whether she was going to be, like, 'Now I have an Oscar. I'm sorry. I can't talk to you,'" Winfrey said. "No, she's too sweet to do that. But I didn't know whether or not she would be interested in doing television."

Winfrey, who frequently championed books on her daytime talk show, produced the TV movie adaptation of the novel by Zora Neale Hurston.

"Their Eyes Were Watching God" also stars Michael Ealy, Ruben Santiago-Hudson and Ruby Dee. Berry stars as Janie Crawford, whose journey takes her through three marriages with very different men.



Halle Berry, left, and Oprah Winfrey

Stars seek ban on cat, dog furs

Heather Mills McCartney, wife of Paul McCartney, and Rick Wakeman of Yes campaigned for a ban on cat and dog fur in the European Union.

"It's barbaric that this is going on," McCartney said, holding back tears as she showed a fur coat made from 42 Alsatian puppies.

The United States and Australia have bans on the trade, as well as EU member nations parts of the world including Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece and Italy.

The campaigners want the ban to be extended to all 25 EU nations.

During Tuesday's campaign stop, a video was shown of emaciated dogs and cats kept in dark, cramped rooms and cages. The video also portrayed the slaughter of a German shepherd.

The campaigners claim some 2 million cats and dogs are killed each year for their fur, mostly in China, and shipped to other parts of the world under false labels or no label at all.

McCartney, whose husband is known for his animal rights activism, criticized the fashion industry for using furs.

"How can anyone think this is beautiful?" she asked.

'Apprentice' winner behind counter

A six-figure salary from Donald Trump didn't keep Bill Rancic, winner of the first season of "The Apprentice," from landing a job — temporarily — at Home Depot Inc. and Wendy's International Inc. in Northern Virginia.

On Tuesday, Rancic helped customers in the paint department at the Home Depot store in Alexandria and worked the front counter and drive-thru window at Wendy's in Merrifield. It was for a promotion for Sing-A-Job.com, a recruiting company for hourly jobs.

"Although I'm no longer an hourly worker, I was," said Rancic, who now oversees construction at a Trump building project in Chicago. "My first job, when I was 14, was an hourly job, and that really gave me my foundation."

The Chicago native has worked as an undercover security guard, mowed lawns for a parks department and scooped ice cream at an old-fashioned ice cream parlor.

He was an Internet entrepreneur before being hired by Trump, the host of the NBC reality show, now in its third season.

Stories and photos from wire services



McCartney



Rancic

Horoscope

The word "deserve" is subjective. Some people perform great acts of generosity every day and feel they are worthy of only crumbs from the banquet of life. Others do nothing and expect grapes to be peeled for them. Mars and Jupiter square off, encouraging us to consider our sense of entitlement. Is it balanced? Fair-minded?

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(March 3). You get serious about your No. 1 goal this year and will have what you want. You are also able to find smaller wins along the way by sticking to your plan. Casual relationships don't stay casual. Early summer highlights a big commitment. Someone you hire makes a difference in June and July. Love with a Scorpio or Sagittarius is favored.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You sometimes feel that if you're not acting against an opposing force, you're not working hard enough. But everything doesn't have to be a fight. Try compliance for a change. You may actually like it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

There's something grand and melancholy about working alone, and you'll revel in it. You'll probably burn the midnight oil tonight, too — just remember, there is a point of diminishing returns.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

You'll have extraordinary insights while accomplishing ordinary tasks like cleaning up, making phone calls and clearing your desk. Get out in the world this afternoon. Your luck is uncanny. You could even win a raffle or lottery.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

No one wants to admit bad behavior, but your refreshing honesty drives you to do just that. You could find yourself defending the very thing only a fool would defend. You're in good company, though.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Romance permeates your environment, though it's not necessarily the

kind that involves being in love. Very grown-up behaviors are highlighted — this could include deep business, litigation or some lofty form of decadence.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Learning to do something creative with your hands (gardening? sketching? cooking?) will keep you out of the restless prison of lepidium. Also, make a firm, regular date with someone you care about.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

There's so much to get done now that you'll wish you had your own staff — unless, of course, you do have your own staff, and then, you'll wish they were one-tenth as efficient as you are.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Cause and effect are clearly illustrated in your life. The more forthright you are, the more successful you'll be. Don't keep anyone waiting on hold — it's bad karma. Tonight features an eternally seductive temptation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You need a break from rigorous self-observation. Return to childish innocence by refusing to over-think your work. Also, make more time for "bessies." Fivokous activities are lucky.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Though you can appreciate a well-told story as heartily as the next person, today, it's the facts you're not after, not imagination. Ask direct and pointed questions, and you'll learn exactly what you need to know.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Avoid the (juicy) rumor mill! If you can take the high road, you stand to gain while others learn their lesson. On a financial note, you'll get access to the money once you prove you can handle it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

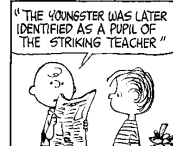
Diverse characters delight and inspire you. You're to be commended for being able to relate to people of all walks of life. If you follow the golden rule, everyone gets along. Your connection with a Scorpio is particularly strong.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



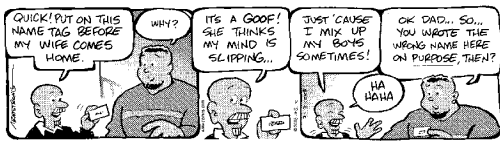
Peanuts



Calvin and Hobbes



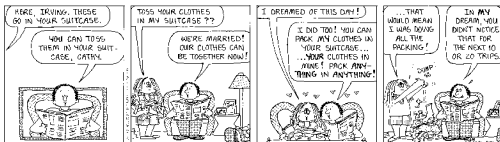
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



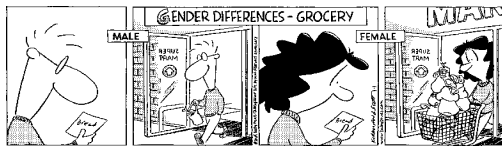
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



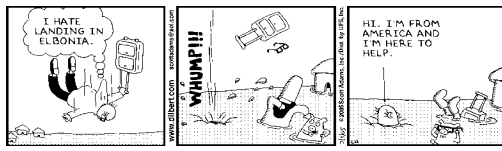
Spider Man



Blondie



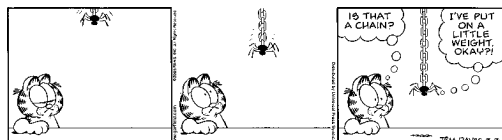
Dilbert



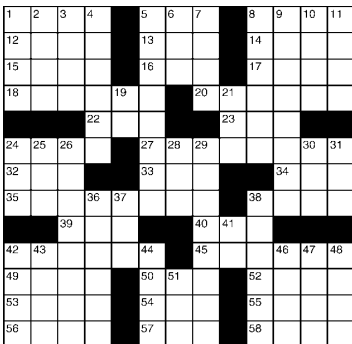
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Gift-tag word
- 5 Diastema
- 8 Detail
- 12 Mystique
- 13 Tree-ring tally
- 14 — Valley, Calif.
- 15 Crystal gazer
- 16 Outy's cohort
- 17 Writer Kingsley
- 18 — Roell (artistic illusion)
- 20 Tags
- 22 Lummock
- 23 Moment
- 24 Huck's craft
- 27 New Zealand port
- 32 — king
- 33 IRS employee
- 34 Shaft of light
- 35 Ascots et al.
- 38 Advantage
- 39 Prior to
- 40 Announcer
- 42 Will subject
- 45 Zorba's place
- 49 Lose weight
- 50 Mound start
- 52 Streamlet
- 53 A handful
- 54 Flee the fuzz
- 55 Five carats
- 56 Basin accessory
- 57 The lady
- 58 Longings

Down

- 1 Observe Ramadan
- 2 Contrite one
- 3 Hydrox rival
- 4 Woodchuck's kin
- 5 Competitor's countenance
- 6 Past
- 7 Rid of rind
- 8 Sherman's "Jeffersons" co-star
- 9 Hours-worked record
- 10 Olympic runner
- 11 Not even come close
- 19 Ma's mate
- 21 Send out invitations
- 24 Took off
- 25 Brewery product
- 26 Camera hogs rack it up
- 28 "— Lazy River"
- 29 Gin, for one
- 30 Kvetch
- 31 Turn red?
- 36 "Seinfeld" role
- 37 Drenched
- 38 Pep
- 41 On the other hand
- 42 Being, to Brutus
- 43 Lento
- 44 Grown-up elvers
- 46 Green acres
- 47 Family
- 48 "Desire Under the —"
- 51 "Sis boom bahl!"

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-3

CRYPTOQUIP

Y ICCF PRIWF IQV KYVKWH
 CFCGMPZOH. RC PFF NZQR
 OMC GQQV KVCPOWVCH
 RQVN IQV GCPZWOH.
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: IRISH. SONG
 CONCERNING A FELLOW WHO ALWAYS SMILES
 WARMLY: "THE WEARING OF THE GRIN."
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: C equals E

Consider kids' safety at hotels

Dear Abby: I work in a hotel where many people pass through our lobby each day. We have great guests, but we also get our share of strange or questionable people, too.

It's not uncommon for police to send us information or inquire about criminals of various sorts who stop over at the hotel. And, for the record, it doesn't matter how polite the hotel is, either.

My letter concerns parents who allow very young children to come to the front desk alone, or to hang out in the lobby. I have seen scantily clad young teens in swimsuits walked by. These girls have no idea that they're being gawked by 40-plus businessmen in suits who make off-color comments about their bodies.

It's also not unusual to see 4- and 5-year-olds get on and off the elevators alone because their parents don't feel like coming to the desk to pick up items.

Why, then, do we wonder how our kids are snatched up so

easily by predators? Hotel staff are here to serve and be helpful, but we cannot serve as baby sitters. We are often multitasking, so no one should assume we have an eye on your child. How are we to know whether the 50-year-old man pulling your 12-

year-old daughter aside and whispering something in her ear is her dad — or a pervert? When children go missing, we staff members get screamed at by parents insisting that we should have seen something about the person the child was last seen with. Well, here's the simple answer: We're employed to conduct hotel business, not monitor children. When the telephone rings, we must answer and take a reservation. Our attention cannot be on a lobby child when there is a child bustling with activity, a line of five or more guests checking in and out, someone on the inside line requesting more pillows or ques-

tioning a bill, and our outside lines are ringing off the hook.

—Frustrated at the Front Desk and sympathize. Part of the problem may be that the *hospitality industry* has been so successful in making guests feel at home away from home, that people forget they are NOT at home. An illustration would be a recent item on the television news here in California. An attractive young woman entered her upscale hotel and decided to dash into the powder room off the main lobby. She was unaware that a man followed her into the hotel through the lobby and into the bathroom. The only thing that saved her from his sexual assault was that another woman happened to enter the bathroom.

In the interest of safety, travelers should never let their guard down, and parents should remain vigilant.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 60440, Los Angeles CA 90060. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.ueppress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TOIDI

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NIFSI

ARQUEV

PERUSH

www.jumble.com

Answer: A

Jumbles: AIDED PLAID WEAKEN AUTHOR

Yesterday's Jumble: What the tipsy gambler and the dice had in common — THEY WERE 'LOADED'

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argilione



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Tag-a-long cousin too much to bear

Dear Annie: I have been married to "Ricky" for several years. And his widowed mother own a cabin in the woods.

Ricky and I work hard, barely seeing each other, and look forward to spending weekends at the cabin where we can rest and relax.

The problem is Ricky's cousin "Karl," who is unmarried and unemployed. Karl is the biggest mouth you have ever seen. He constantly drops by the cabin uninvited and intrudes on our time. If we have guests for the weekend, Karl assumes he is part of the gang.

When Ricky and I go out with friends, Karl finds us. He has never once reciprocated, brought anything or chipped in to pay for refreshments.

Ricky and I argue about this constantly. I have discussed it with my mother-in-law and have even told Karl directly that he should pull first and contribute once in a while. It has made no difference.

Annie's Mailbox



I rarely go to the cabin anymore, and I leave if Karl shows up. Ricky says it's his man's cabin, too, and she likes having Karl there, although he has never done a single thing for her in his life. I say we've earned the right to choose who spends time with us. Karl is ruining our marriage.

—Marsha in Montana

Dear Marsha: Obviously, it doesn't bother Ricky or his mother that Karl visits all the time or that he comes empty-handed. He is family, and they love him, which means they are not going to toss him out because he is a freeloader.

Decide how much this bothers you, because if it is wrecking your marriage, you are giving it more importance than it merits. The cabin is a nice getaway, but it comes with Karl attached. Look for ways to relax without going there.

Dear Annie: My three sisters and I are very close, and we want to take a vacation together, but there is one problem. My older sister, "Rhonda," has recently been ordered by the court to go to AA or she will lose visitation rights to her kids.

In spite of this court order, we happen to know that Rhonda still drinks. We are concerned that if we take her with us on vacation, especially if the rest of us drink, she will get out of control.

—Little Sister

Dear Little Sister: Rhonda needs your support to stay sober and be part of her children's lives, but your plans should not be dependent on her. Maybe if she knew why you preferred to go without her, it would give her the incentive to stop. Please look in your phone book for Al-Anon, or call 1-888-4AL-ANON and ask how best to help your sister.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniemailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



GRAFFITI

THE WORLD IS A PUZZLE WITH A COUPLE OF PEACES MISSING

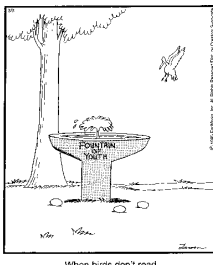
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Domis the Menace



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The Far Side



Non Sequitur



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Payton Davis waived by new teams, could return to former clubs

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Gary Payton wants to finish out the season with a playoff contract. The Atlanta Hawks don't fall into that category.

The Hawks waived Payton on Tuesday, the deadline for teams to clear waivers and be eligible for a playoff roster.

Atlanta, which has the NBA's worst record (10-46), acquired Payton last week at the trade



Payton

deadline in a deal that sent leading scorer and rebounder Antoine Walker to the Boston Celtics.

But Payton never reported to the Hawks and sought a buyout of his contract by Tuesday, which he got.

"Everything's fine," Hawks General Manager Billy Knight said. "It's good for Gary, it's good for us. We want our young players to get playing time, and he wants to be a free agent and make the playoffs."

The Hawks never made a push to bring in Payton, and asked whether he ever really expected Payton to show, Knight said, "I wouldn't comment about that part of it. I knew I'd talk to his agent."

The 36-year-old guard relocated to Boston last summer from the Lakers. He was averaging 12.1 points and 6.1 assists this season for the Celtics, who are interested in bringing him back.

Boston coach Doc Rivers said Boston is one of six or seven teams interested in the nine-time All-Star.

The Celtics were sparing no efforts to bring him back. Paul Pierce and Rick Davis called Payton, as did Rivers. The coach said Payton would be happy to return to Boston, though he was keeping his options open.

"I would love to have him back," Rivers said. "When we made the trade to acquire Payton, no one wanted him. Now six or seven teams want him. So that means he did his job very well here. I think he's made himself very attractive with what he's done here."

Hornets waive Davis, Robinson

NEW ORLEANS — The New Orleans Hornets waived center David Davis and forward Glenn Robinson on Tuesday, just days after trading for the veteran players.

Davis and Glenn have been quality players in this league for many years, but we knew when we made these trades that neither of them were a part of our plans for the future," Hornets General Manager Allan Bristow said. "By waiving them we can allow them to pursue an opportunity with another team this season."

Davis came to the Hornets along with Speedy Claxton shortly before last week's trading deadline in a deal that sent point guard

Baron Davis to Golden State. But the Hornets never expected Davis, whose contract expires after paying \$10.1 million this season, to report to New Orleans.

The Indiana Pacers and Detroit Pistons are among teams that have expressed interest in acquiring the 35-year-old center, who has averaged 8.5 points and 8.2 rebounds during his 15-year career.

"There are some things that have to happen for the deal to be completed," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said before Indiana's game against Seattle on Tuesday night. "I don't have the latest word on it, but we're hopeful that we can get him here."

Davis played his first nine seasons in Indiana from 1991-2000. He was traded in 2000 to the Portland Trail Blazers for All-Star forward Jermaine O'Neal.

"If this can be done, having (Davis) back in a Pacer uniform would be exciting for our fans because he was certainly a terrific player over a long period of time," Carlisle said.

Robinson was sent to the Hornets by the Philadelphia 76ers in exchange for Jamal Mashburn and Rodney Rogers on Feb. 24. But the 10-year veteran, who averaged 20.8 points in 679 games, did not appear in a game for the 76ers this season after being placed on the injured list Nov. 1 with left ankle tendinitis.

Henderson back with Mavs

DALLAS — Alan Henderson signed with Dallas on Tuesday, rejoining the Mavericks less than a week after the team traded him to the Milwaukee Bucks.

Henderson was waived one day after the Feb. 24 trade that sent him and Calvin Booth to Milwaukee in exchange for Keith Van Horn.

Terms of his new deal with the Mavericks were undisclosed.

Before being traded, Henderson was the only Mavericks player to appear in every game. He started his last two games after center Erick Dampier went down with a stress fracture Feb. 17.

Henderson is averaging 3.5 points and 4.5 rebounds this season.

Shaq back at practice, says he'll play Thursday

MIAMI — Miami Heat center Shaquille O'Neal returned to practice Tuesday, one week after spraining his left knee in an awkward tumble against the Chicago Bulls.

O'Neal, who missed all but the first two minutes of that Bulls game and was held out of Miami's next three contests, said he plans to play on Thursday when the Heat visit New Jersey.

"I went through the whole practice," O'Neal said. "It was good."

BY ANNE M. PETERSON

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Maurice Cheeks was fired Wednesday as coach of the Portland Trail Blazers, who have dropped seven of nine games and are in danger of missing the playoffs for the second straight year.

Kevin Pritchard, the team's director of player personnel, was appointed interim head coach.

"It's a sad day," General Manager John Nash said at a news conference. "Maurice Cheeks is a very, very good coach. He's an equally good person."

Nash said he spoke earlier in the day with Cheeks, who was "very professional but also seemed very disappointed, as any-

one would be in this type of situation."

Cheeks, near the end of a four-year contract estimated at \$12 million, was popular with the players and fans. But when the losses mounted, he was believed on the way out.

Portland's latest defeat came Tuesday night, 103-93 to the Detroit Pistons. The Blazers (22-33) are in 12th place in the Western Conference, six games behind the Los Angeles Lakers for the eighth and final playoff spot. They went 41-41 last season, missing the playoffs for the first time in 22 years.

Cheeks leaves the Blazers with a 162-139 career record.

Cheeks, who played in the NBA for 15 seasons, was hired by Port-

land in 2001 to replace Mike Dunleavy, who was also fired.

Pritchard was hired by the Blazers in August after working as scout for the San Antonio Spurs.

When Cheeks came to Portland he was expected to turn around a team beset by internal bickering and trouble on the court. The problems, however, continued.

Some players had been cited for marijuana possession. One of them, forward Rasheed Wallace, was suspended by the league for seven games for threatening a team beset on the loading dock of the Rose Garden. Forward Zach Randolph was suspended by the team for punching Ruben Patterson during practice, bloodying his face.

Wallace was traded to the Pistons, who won the title with him last year.

Tucker's follow leads Badgers

BY ARNIE STAPLETON

The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — It wasn't so much a premonition as it was recognition of how poorly his team was shooting.

Wisconsin coach Bo Ryan had watched the Badgers go without a field goal since the 9:35 mark of the second half. So he felt confident telling forward Alando Tucker during a timeout with 10 seconds left and the game tied that he would have to beat Indiana with a putback at the buzzer off somebody's missed shot.

"Alando, you're going to get the offensive rebound on the miss that's going to win the game," Ryan told Tucker.

Sure enough, Tucker's putback at the buzzer allowed the 23-year-old forward to beat Indiana 62-60 in the only game involving a ranked team Tuesday night.

"I told the guys in the locker room afterward that at least one guy listened to me one time," Ryan said.

Tucker, who scored 17 points, coached for his career.

"He actually did say that. He told me, 'If it is a missed shot, I want you to attack the glass hard,'" Tucker recounted. "So, I guess it played out like he wanted it."

After the timeout, Tucker was short on a three-pointer, and Mike Wilkinson grabbed the rebound but was too far underneath the basket for his follow shot to come close. No matter, Tucker swooped in, grabbed that rebound and put it back up in one motion before being overawed by his teammates after the ball fell through the net as the backboard's red light went on.

"Mike got in great position to get the rebound," Tucker said. "He made a great play by getting it up into the air. He got it up in the air, and it was a spot where I was coming right to, and I grabbed the ball and laid it in."

Indiana's Roderick Wilmont, whose putback with 15 seconds tied it at 60, was kicking himself for allowing Tucker to get past him for the rebound.

"I missed it. I should have had the box-out," Wilmont said. "We



free-throw line over the final 2:50.

He did, however, make three of four foul shots in the final minute. Wilkinson's class has won at least 10 Big Ten games in each of its four seasons, a school first, and he's been involved in every one of the team's 87 victories since 2000-01 mark, the best four-year stretch in school history.

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Rough start for Willis, Pettitte

Marlins' left-hander hit hard by University of Miami; Astros' southpaw struggles in intrasquad scrimmage

The Associated Press

While Dontrelle Willis got limber, the guys facing him brought the lumber — or aluminum, in this case.

The Florida Marlins' lefty was hit hard in his spring debut Tuesday, with the University of Miami zinging him with their metal bats.

Willis gave up six runs and six hits in 2½ innings and the college boys won 9-7 in an exhibition at Jupiter, Fla.

"I was throwing right where I wanted to. With the talented team they had and the bats they had, they were just turning everything around. But I had a great time out there. I was glad to get out there and get a game feel," Willis said.

"They're a good team. This is no junior college. This is the notorious University of Miami," he said.

The only thing that surprised Willis was the sound of the ball hitting the bat. He was fooled by a soft liner up the middle that went for an infield single.

"It was funny because when the ball came back at me, the ping was so loud I thought it was harder than it was, so I kind of jumped back," Willis said.

Miami (10-3), ranked 11th this season, won its first game against a major-league team since March 10, 1982, when they beat Baltimore 7-6.

Marlins newcomer Carlos Delgado went 0-for-2 with a strikeout. All of Florida's starters were out of the game by the fifth inning.

Another prominent lefty got in some work, too. Andy Pettitte faced hitters for the first time since season-ending elbow surgery in August, pitching a shaky inning in Houston's intrasquad game at Kissimmee, Fla.

Pettitte threw only fastballs during his 2½-pitch performance, a cautionary measure to prevent a setback in his recovery. He gave up two runs, two walks and three hits before getting an out.

Pettitte stayed in to record four outs in the inning because the Astros wanted him to get in some extra work.

"He was a little protective of his arm," Astros catcher Brad Ausmus said. "I think he got a little frustrated with himself."

"I felt like I hadn't pitched in a long time," Pettitte said. "I didn't feel real comfortable out there today."

Tim Hudson felt fine. The Atlanta newcomer completed a \$47 million, four-year contract extension with the Braves, giving up the chance to go through free agency at the end of the season.

"I knew all along this was the place I wanted to be," the former 20-game winner said.

Hudson was traded from Oakland to Atlanta in December. He went 12-6 with a 3.53 ERA in 27 starts, but spent a month on the disabled list with an injury to his left side.

Spring training games begin in earnest Wednesday, with one that should attract some attention: the Washington Nationals vs. the New York Mets.

With the curly "W" on their caps, the former Montreal Expos give fans in Washington a home team for the first time since the Senators left town following the 1971 season.

"It's going to be a very special day, even though it's just spring training," general manager Jim Bowden said.

After saying earlier he wouldn't play a full complement of regulars, manager Frank Robinson changed his plans. Newcomers Jose Guillen and Vinny Castilla are expected to be in the lineup, along with Jose Vidro and Nick Johnson.

Tony Armas Jr. will pitch against the Mets' Tom Glavine at Space Coast Stadium in Viera, Fla., where the Nationals hold camp.

"Frank told me how he wasn't going to start his regulars for the first few days, but, boy, they're all in there tomorrow, at least for the first couple of innings," Bowden said. "And I think that's good, because it allows the fans in



Florida's Dontrelle Willis gave up six runs in 2½ innings on Tuesday in a 9-7 loss to the University of Miami in Jupiter, Fla.

Washington, as well as America, to see some of our players. A lot of these players are not very well known. They will be in six months."

The Pittsburgh Pirates opened exhibition play by beating Valparaiso 12-0 in Bradenton, Fla. Josh Fogg pitched two scoreless innings and non-roster infielder Jose Leon homered and drove in three runs.

Russell Branyan, one of three veterans vying for the Milwaukee Brewers' starting third base job this spring, had a solo homer and RBI to help his side to a 4-1 intrasquad win.

Branyan played 51 games for the Brewers last season after spending the first part of the season in the minor leagues with Atlanta and Cleveland. He's hoping his power stroke will give him an edge over Wes Helms and non-roster invitee Jeff Cirillo.

Veterans shut out for Hall induction

By RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Gil Hodges, Ron Santo and everyone else on the ballot fell short Wednesday as once again the baseball Veterans Committee failed to elect anyone to the Hall of Fame.

Hodges and Santo came the closest with 65 percent — 75 percent was needed for induction. Tony Oliva and Jim Kaat were the only other players to be named on more than half of the 80 ballots.

In 2003, the redesigned Vets committee also pitched a shut-out.

There will not be another election until 2007, the same year managers, umpires and executives also will be considered.

The current 83-member committees includes 60 Hall of Famers. All but three turned in paper ballots this year.

Hodges and Santo both drew 52 votes, eight shy of what they needed. It was a slight improvement for Hodges, the former Brooklyn first baseman and New York Mets manager who fell 11 votes short in 2003.

Joe Torre, Maury Wills, Luis Tiant and Roger Maris were among the other players who got less than 50 percent this year. Thurman Munson and old-time pitcher Snooky Joe Wood each received two votes.

Yankees pull Johnson from first spring outing

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Randy Johnson will miss his first scheduled spring training start with the Yankees on Thursday because of tightness in his left calf.

The problem is not considered serious, and the left-hander is expected to be ready for what would have been his second start on Tuesday.

"I'm not concerned about him ... not at all," Yankees owner George Steinbrenner said. "No Joe (Torre, the manager) knows



Yankees pull Johnson from first spring outing

what he's doing, and Randy is a good man."

Johnson first experienced tightness in the calf last week, and the injury may have occurred during fielding drills Monday.

"This is not that big of a deal," Johnson said. "If I had to pitch today, I could have."

"It doesn't concern our trainers," Torre said. "We don't feel it's anything that's going to be seri-

ous or major. We don't want to take any chances."

Griffey sits out scrimmage

SARASOTA, Fla. — Ken Griffey Jr. sat out the Cincinnati Reds' intrasquad game Tuesday because he's not up to full speed in his recovery from a torn hamstring.

"We are mostly concerned with his ability to change directions and decelerate," trainer Mark Mann said. "He is running 90 to 95 percent right now. When he can go at 100 percent two or three days in a row without residual pain, he will be cleared to play."

Phillies starter Padilla expected to miss two weeks

CLEARWATER, Fla. — Phillies right-hander Vicente Padilla will be sidelined for two weeks after an MRI on Monday confirmed he has triceps tendinitis.

He missed two months of the 2004 season with the same injury.

The 27-year-old is scheduled to be Philadelphia's No. 2 starter.

If Padilla isn't ready, Gavin Floyd, Philadelphia's top pitching prospect, has the inside track to replace him in the rotation.

"No I didn't, but I got a great one in Joe Torre," Steinbrenner said. "He's just the perfect guy to work with, for anybody."

Randy Johnson experienced tightness in his left calf last week and during a fielding drill Monday.

Steinbrenner finally over last year's postseason meltdown

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner needed a long time to get over his team's stunning loss to the Boston Red Sox in the AL playoffs.

"It really didn't," Steinbrenner said Wednesday, one day before the Yankees' spring training opener against Pittsburgh. "It was very hard. ... I hate to lose. I'm a very bad loser, and I hope my men feel the same way this year. [I] just hope we get out there and get the job done."

The Boss said Boston "deserves all the credit" for its victory, and again stated he has no problem with the Red Sox handing out their World Series rings before the opener at Fenway Park against the Yankees.

"They can give their rings out anytime they want to," Steinbrenner said. "They deserve it."

Don't look to Steinbrenner to call any team meetings, something he often did in the past.

"I think they understand where I'm coming from and what I'm looking for," Steinbrenner said. "So I think they'll be fine."

The Yankees offices emphasis was on improving their starting rotation.

Steinbrenner credited general manager Brian Cashman and manager Joe Torre for acquiring Randy Johnson from Arizona and signing Carl Pavano and Jaret Wright to free agent deals.

"I saw we didn't do what we should have done last year in pitching," Steinbrenner

said. "But we'll do it this year. I've always liked Randy Johnson. I always wanted him over here."

The Yankees haven't won the World Series since 2000.

Torre is entering his 10th season as New York's manager.

Steinbrenner said he never thought anyone would last that long on the Yankees bench.

"No I didn't, but I got a great one in Joe Torre," Steinbrenner said. "He's just the perfect guy to work with, for anybody."

A pay-for-play payoff that may be costly

Incentives might widen gap between stars, PGA Tour's rank and file

BY DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The stars are aligned in Miami, and some believe it's no accident.

The Ford Championship at Doral begins on Thursday with one of the strongest fields on the PGA Tour this year. The only player missing from the top 12 in the world ranking is No. 3 Ernie Els, who has played the Dubai Desert Classic in the first weekend of March since winning at Doral in 2002.

A small part of the tournament began Monday.

Across town at Indian Creek Country Club, Ford Motor Co. had a corporate outing involving Vijay Singh (No. 1), Retief Goosen (No. 5), Sergio Garcia (No. 6) and Padraig Harrington (No. 8).

And they didn't show up out of the goodness of their heart. The Sun-Sentinel cited a tournament source as saying the fee was as high as \$150,000.

Appearance money? "It's a corporate outing early in the tournament week," said Duke Butler, vice president of tournament business affairs at the PGA Tour. "It's not unlike a number of things that have gone on for years. None of those stipulate that you must play in the tournament."

Ford did not need to invite Phil Mickelson (No. 4) to the outing, because it already has an endorsement deal with the Masters champion. Lefty played with select Ford courses on a different golf course Tuesday.

What gives the Doral field some serious pop is Tiger Woods, the top draw anywhere in the world. Woods wasn't included in the outing for obvious reasons — he is sponsored by Buick, and \$150,000 is

chump change for a guy who commands \$3 million when he goes overseas.

Still, the corporate day with four players — all of them IMG clients — has become such an issue that it will be on the agenda when tournament sponsors gather for their annual meeting later this month during the week of The Players Championship.

"Those players already told us last year they were going to play Doral," PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem said. "Perception-wise, I understand the concern. We have to deal with the perception."

In some respects, it is simply smart business, and Ford is not alone.

Ford became title sponsor at Doral about the time it signed up Mickelson to wear its logo on his shirt and make "What will Phil do next?" commercials. That all but assures Lefty will be at Doral every year, although he skipped the first year when his wife was pregnant with their third child.

That's no different than the deal between Buick and Woods.

Woods is not contractually obligated to play any of the four Buick tournaments, although he has played at least two of them each year since he became part of the Buick golf team.

And don't forget 84 Lumber.

The Pennsylvania company signed an endorsement deal with Singh and John Daly, another big draw. And speaking of appearance money, 84 Lumber attracted a stronger-than-usual field last year by offering every eligible player in its tournament six first-class seats on a charter to Ireland for the World Golf Championship.

Jim Furyk, a camp champion at Doral, did not get an invitation to the Ford outing. He

wasn't offended. And he is not worried where these "outings" might lead — at least not yet.

"It's not like it's a new thing on tour. It's just more prominent, maybe more flashier," Furyk said. "Is it good or bad? I don't know. I guess it would be bad if it reflects on the purse."

The suggestion was that tournaments might reduce their purses to pay prominent players for the outing, giving them guaranteed money.

But Furyk quickly noted that the Doral purse is \$5.5 million, up \$500,000 from last year, and that Ford has gone above and beyond to inject life into the tournament.

Still, it raises a couple of questions.

If this corporate outing was simply appearance money in disguise, will this lead to competition among tournaments?

"They need to watch this," said Kym Hougham, tournament director of the Wachovia Championship. "You don't want a case where the rich gets richer."

Hougham has no worries now. Quail Hollow is good enough to hold a major, and that alone is enough to attract players to the Wachovia Championship. Players get a Mercedes for a courtesy car, and the biggest perk of all is having only two amateurs in the pro-am.

But he can relate. Hougham used to be tournament director of the John Deere Classic, held the week before the British Open.

His last year there, he had only one player among the top 50 in his tournament. He doesn't remember who it was.

"It's important for a title sponsor to feel he has a world-class field," Hougham said.

But that leads to another question.

Exactly what is a strong field? Doral has



Vijay Singh, foreground, and Tiger Woods, background, will compete at Doral in Miami this week in the Ford Championship. At a nearby country club, Singh and three others in the top 10 in the world golf ranking played in a corporate outing which gave the players a \$150,000 fee for playing, according to a local newspaper.

11 of the top 12 in the world ranking, but having Woods turned a great field into a spectacular one. In fact, one could argue that Torrey Pines had a stronger field because it had Singh, Woods, Mickelson and Els, four of the biggest names on tour.

Harrington, Garcia, Stewart Cink and David Toms only offer strength in numbers.

No one gives a tournament buzz like Woods.

"Tiger is the key," Hougham said. "If everyone is being honest about this, tournament directors would be happy with eight out of the top 10. But having Tiger legitimizes the perception people have of the field."

Ford didn't pay a dime to get him.

Deluge on the West Coast more of an anomaly than the norm

BY DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The alarmists were out in full force the past two weeks in California.

First, the Nissan Open was cut short to 36 holes because of heavy rain that left bunkers unplayable. Then, the Match Play Championship began a day late when La Costa Resort was flooded, and the course was so wet all flood that officials could only cut the fairways with mowers typically used on greens.

Stuart Appleby suggested moving the West Coast swing to later in the year. Tiger Woods thought the PGA Tour should consider going to Florida first, then California.

It sounded like a good idea — until last weekend's Champions Tour event in sunny Florida got so much rain that it was shortened to 36 holes and didn't finish until Monday.

This just in ... California is not the only place it rains.

As Scott Scott sounded prophetic in the Sun Open in mid-January when he asked why he wasn't going to play on the PGA Tour again until the week before the Match Play Championship.

"For a tour that tries to follow the sun, it seems we play underwater a lot of the time," Scott said.



A worker at La Costa traverses a small on-course lake last week.

True, it wasn't the best of weather on the West Coast — fog delays at Torrey Pines, wind that briefly stopped one round in Phoenix, rain at Riviera and flooding at what is starting to be known as Lake La Costa.

But look at the bright side: For an outdoor sport, golf has an incredible record of getting in 72 holes. The amazing thing was not that the Nissan Open went only 36 holes, but that this stuff doesn't happen more often.

Since the Nissan Open began in 1928, it was only the second time the tournament did not go the distance.

The leader for rain-shortened events on the PGA Tour is the Southern Farm Bureau Classic, with eight tournaments lasting

fewer than 72 holes because of bad weather. In second place, which should surprise no one, is the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Five of its tournaments were rain-shortened, with one year canceled altogether.

Superintendents and PGA Tour rules officials don't get enough credit for getting courses ready for play, especially given storm systems that can park themselves over a tournament.

Greensboro has never had a rain-shortened event since it began in 1938. Tucson has completed 72 holes every year since it started in 1945. Perhaps the best

record belongs to the Western Open. It has had only one tournament cut short by rain since it went to 72 holes in 1902.

So, when PGA Tour tournament director Mark Russell said during the Nissan Open, "We are getting into waters here that I can never remember us being in," it wasn't just a play on words.

Everything runs in cycles. Pebble Beach has had mostly sunny skies the past five years.

Match Play future

Another week of swampy conditions at La Costa Resort increased speculation that the

Match Play Championship would be leaving after 2006, the end of the current TV contract.

One thing is clear: It won't be leaving the United States.

"We'll take a look at all the factors," said James Murphy, global managing director of marketing and communications for Accenture, the tournament's sponsor. "But we desire to have our tournament in the United States."

The sponsor prefers to be at a resort, with plenty of golf courses nearby to entertain clients. One place under consideration — if Accenture wants to leave La Costa — is Arizona.

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Smarty Jones' Elliott detained by U.S. immigration

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Kentucky Derby winning jockey Stewart Elliott will have been arrested and detained by federal immigration officials because of a guilty plea to felony assault four years ago.

Elliott, a Canadian citizen who won the Derby and Preakness aboard Smarty Jones last year, was taken into custody Tuesday and arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents at the Philadelphia International Airport, the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement.

The 39-year-old Toronto native was being held Wednesday at the York County Prison.

Elliott's criminal history became public during Smarty Jones' bid for the Triple Crown, which fell short when he lost to Birdstone by a length in the Belmont Stakes in June. It then showed up in screenings by customs officers at the Philadelphia airport this week. Homeland Security spokesman Manny Van Pelt said.

Under federal immigration law, aliens with felony convictions are subject to removal from the United States. Van Pelt declined to comment on Elliott's immigration status specifically, but said that he "is not here illegally."

Unless Stewart agrees to leave the country, he will remain in detention until a federal immigration judge determines his status, officials said.

A lawyer for Elliott said her client was "temporarily arrested before the immigration court" Tuesday and believes the matter will be resolved Thursday.

"Mr. Elliott voluntarily appeared before the immigration court in Philadelphia on March 1 to address the 2001 incident that was made public after the Kentucky Derby," Stuart Blatt-Chariy, a lawyer representing Elliott, said Wednesday from her office in Trenton, N.J. "The current situation is merely a procedure issue and will be resolved within the next 24 hours."

Elliott pleaded guilty in June 2001 to aggravated assault stemming from a fight with a friend inside the man's Burlington County, N.J., home in 2000. He was sentenced to one year of probation and ordered to pay \$15,000 to cover the victim's medical bills, according to court records.

NHL owners, players hold separate meetings

NEW YORK — NHL players might be replaced next season. Commissioner Gary Bettman

and the league's board of governors emerged from a five-hour meeting in New York on Tuesday to find Bettman and the owners committed to having a season in the fall.

The NHL plans to invite the players' association to the negotiating table soon, but if a deal can't be worked out in time for the season to open on schedule, then using replacement players would become a possibility.

"Hopefully, it's an alternative proposition that we never have to

Sports briefs

focus on because our commitment remains making a fair partnership deal with the players," Bettman said in the same hotel in which he canceled the season two weeks earlier because of the lockout.

While the owners, general managers and other executives gathered in New York, about 150 of the NHL's 700-plus players met with league leadership in Toronto.

Both meetings Tuesday served to provide updates on what happened in the failed negotiations the past 5½ months. Union leaders scheduled another meeting for Wednesday in Toronto with player agents.

NHL players boost gate in Swedish league

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Locked-out NHL stars helped the Swedish Elite League set an attendance record this season.

The league said Wednesday that 1.86 million people attended games this season, an 8.4 percent increase from the previous year.

More than 50 NHL players competed in the 12-team league, including Colorado's Peter Forsberg and Detroit's Henrik Zetterberg. The NHL canceled its season last month.

Zetterberg was the league's top scorer with 50 points in 30 games — 19 goals and 31 assists.

Woosnam chosen Ryder Cup captain '06, Faldo for '08

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Ian Woosnam of Wales and England's Nick Faldo were picked Wednesday as Europe's next Ryder Cup captains.

Woosnam will be the team's captain next year, while Faldo will serve in that role in 2008. The European Tour's tournament committee announced the unprecedented double appointment — reached by unanimous decision — after a closed meeting in Dubai on Tuesday on the eve of the Dubai Desert Classic.

Woosnam, who turned 47 on Wednesday, is the 1991 Masters champion and an eight-time Ryder Cup player.

"Announcing the selection of both players appears to be a compromise to avoid snubbing Faldo. The 47-year-old Englishman is the most successful British player of his generation, with victories in six majors and 11 Ryder Cup appearances."

South Carolina RB Summers dismissed from team

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina dismissed leading rusher Demetrius Summers from the team Tuesday for violating athletics department policy.

There are certain policies and rules that our student-athletes must follow and unfortunately, Demetrius chose to violate these," coach Steve Spurrier said in a statement. "That's where we are with this and we'll move on from here."

Summers ran for 1,125 yards and four touchdowns over the

past two seasons, averaging 5.3 yards per carry. The sophomore also had 23 receptions for 211 yards and two touchdown catches.

NASCAR levies fines, suspends crew chief Lohse

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Busch Series crew chief Todd Lohse was suspended Tuesday for four races.

It was the most severe of several penalties imposed by NASCAR for violations at California Speedway.

Lohse, crew chief for Shane Hmiel, was suspended and fined \$10,000 for unapproved hinged air deflector modifications on the car during inspection last weekend.

The team has appealed to the National Stock Car Racing Commission, and Lohse is allowed to participate in the Busch race in Mexico City this weekend.

Also penalized were Nextel Cup crew chiefs Tim Weiss (\$10,000), Larry Hyder (\$5,000) and Billy Ponder (\$6,000).

Other Busch Series crew chiefs penalized were Tommy Perkins (\$2,500) and John Vermillion (\$500).

Crew chiefs from the Craftsman Truck series who were penalized were Steven Ruyndland (\$2,000), Richard Gray (\$2,000) and Jeffrey Hennes (\$500).

Skier Knauss banned 18 months for doping

OBERSHOEFEN, Switzerland — Austrian skier Hans Knauss was banned for 1½ years by the sport's international federation Tuesday after testing positive for the steroid nandrolone.

The ban covers the 2006 Turin Olympics and could end the 33-year-old skier's career. Knauss has won seven World Cup races in 14 seasons and was a giant slalom silver medalist in the 2003 world championships.

Knauss' lawyer, Christian Flick, said he would appeal in an attempt to reduce the ban to a year.

Nicklaus' grandson dies after falling in hot tub

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — The 18-month-old grandson of golf great Jack Nicklaus died Tuesday after falling into a hot tub where he had been playing electric world championships.

Jake Walter Nicklaus was pronounced dead at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center, Palm Beach, after a sheriff's spokesman said.

The son of Steve and Krista Nicklaus had been playing in the hot tub with his 4-year-old brother and their nanny at the family's home, Miller said. The three left the pool area and went into the house, but Jake slipped away and went through a sliding door to the hot tub, Miller said.

The nanny quickly realized he was missing and discovered him in the water, Miller said. She performed CPR until emergency workers arrived. The boy was breathing at the time, he said.

The boy was brought to a hospital and died shortly after rescuers were called, Miller said.

Study suggests obesity rampant in NFL

A study suggested 56 percent of NFL players are obese, based on a height-to-weight ratio that doesn't consider body muscle versus fat. The NFL is saying the study is bogus because it doesn't measure muscle.

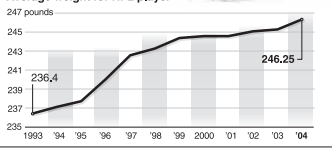
Living large

There were 339 players weighing at least 300 pounds on the NFL rosters in 2004.

Top average weight for NFL team*

RK	TEAM	WEIGHT
1	Oakland	253.89
2	Baltimore	251.62
3	Seattle	250.96
4	Green Bay	250.92
5	New England	249.40
6	Dallas	248.91
7	Minnesota	248.89
8	Houston	248.64
9	Arizona	248.56
10	Detroit	247.79

Average weight for NFL player*



SOURCE: NFL

AP

Weighty: League claims it's no fatter than rest of U.S.

WEIGHTY, FROM BACK PAGE

"The high number of large players was not unexpected, given the pressures of professional athletes to increase their mass. However, it may be without health consequences," the researchers wrote, citing previous studies that documented obesity-related problems, including sleep apnea and high blood pressure in NFL players.

The study appears in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

While the study methods were not very scientific, players' growing girth "is a major concern," said Dr. Arthur Roberts, a former NFL quarterback and retired heart surgeon whose Living Heart Foundation works with the players' union to evaluate heart-related health risks faced by current and retired players.

"These larger body sizes are generally associated with greater cardiovascular risks," Roberts said.

The increasing emphasis on size may be a bad influence on "the young kids that play football around the country... and are trying to be like their heroes," Roberts said.

Players union spokesman Carl Francis said health and safety are "discussed all the time" and that while some players likely are obese, it's not a major problem.

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello called the study substandard and said there's no proof obesity is worse in the NFL than in U.S. society in general, where about 30 percent of adults are obese, based

on BMI data. "This was not a serious medical study," he said.

Dr. Brian Cole of Chicago's Rush University Medical Center, an orthopedic surgeon who works with the Arena Football League, also questioned the study's methods and said some teams list inaccurately high weights to appear more intimidating.

"While clearly there are pressures for increased size" in professional football, relying on published height and weight data, but not physical exams, is faulty, he said.

Julie Burns, a nutritionist who works with the Chicago Bears, said combining BMI data with players' waist measurements is a better fat indicator because some highly conditioned athletes with a high BMI also have a large amount of lean tissue.

Jurkovic said he weighed 272 pounds in the mid 1990s — hefty by any standards on his 6-foot-2 frame — but was pressured by a coach to get even bigger and ballooned up to 328. On the BMI scale, that's obviously obese. Jurkovic said he had already maxed out on weightlifting so he packed on mostly fat by gorging.

Combined with the physical toll of football, excess weight wears down joints and causes problems as players age and then retire, Jurkovic said. At 37, he now weighs a "chunky" 295 and has ankle problems he blames on football and excess weight.

"It's tough for the league to police, but I think they should try to police it," he said.

On the net:

JAMA: <http://jama.ama-assn.org>
NFL: <http://www.nfl.com>

Pats cut versatile Brown

Bucs also part with Super Bowl contributors

The Associated Press

The versatile Troy Brown might not be a part of the New England Patriots' quest for a fourth Super Bowl title in five years. The 33-year-old Brown, a 12-year veteran who was a wide receiver, return man and defensive back for New England, was cut Tuesday as NFL teams released players to get under the \$85.5 million salary cap hours before the league's free agent period began.

Once one of the Patriots' most dependable receivers, Brown's biggest contribution in the most recent Super Bowl season was on defense. With the New England secondary weakened by injuries, Brown stepped in as an extra defensive back.

In his career, he has 475 catches for 5,516 yards and 25 touchdowns.

"As a team player, Troy is right at the top of the list," quarterback Tom Brady said in Jacksonville, Fla. "There is no other guy who has the respect of his teammates like Troy."

Brown is the third high-profile player the Patriots have released in the past week, joining linebacker Roman Phifer and four-time Pro Bowl cornerback Ty Law.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers also cut ties with two of the stars of its Super Bowl team from 2003 when they released quarterback Brad Johnson and wide receiver Joe Jurevics.

The release of the 36-year-old Jurevics had been expected. "I have been to be told that they're fired," said Brian Griese, who started most of last year for Tampa Bay and restructured his contract to help the Bucs get under the cap. "But I think Brad is the type of guy who will use that as motivation. I know he still has some good days left and I know he wants to go and prove himself. I don't have any doubts he'll go somewhere. And wherever he goes, that team will be getting a heck of a player and heck of a leader."

Some of those players could be re-signed if they don't sign elsewhere, although Johnson is unlikely to be among them. He would join a group of veteran quarterbacks already on the market including Jeff Garcia, Vinny Testaverde and Kurt Warner.

Two other Bucs also lost to cornerback Mario Edwards and linebacker Ian Gold. So were

three members of the Raiders, the team they beat in that title game: guard Frank Middleton, safety Ray Buchanan and tight end Roland Williams.

And Green Bay cut left guard Mike Wahle, a solid starter but a player whose \$11.3 million cap number was second on the team only to Brett Favre's.

The Dallas Cowboys released three-time Pro Bowl linebacker Dexter Coakley. He would have been due a \$500,000 roster bonus if he was still on the team Wednesday.

The San Francisco 49ers terminated defensive end Brandon Whiting's contract Tuesday after he failed a physical, cutting ties with the oft-injured defensive end acquired last year in the Terrell Owens trade.

Buffalo defensive tackle Pat Williams and offensive tackle Jonas Jennings became free agents when the Bills failed to re-sign them before midnight.

The Cleveland Browns were close to finalizing a trade that would send defensive tackle Gerard Warren to the Denver Broncos for a fourth-round draft choice, a football source told The Associated Press on Tuesday night.

Skins again pounce, sign Ravens' Rabach

BY JOSEPH WHITE

The Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — The Washington Redskins opened free agency Wednesday by agreeing to terms for a contract with center Casey Rabach. The Associated Press has learned.

Rabach and the Redskins reached a deal at 2:30 a.m., shortly after the free agency signing period began at midnight, an official within the league told the AP on condition of anonymity. Rabach, who spent the last four seasons with the Baltimore Ravens, was driving to Redskins Park later in the morning for a physical and was expected to sign before the day was over.

The Redskins also scheduled a news conference for Wednesday afternoon to formally announce the re-signing of left tackle Chris Samuels. Samuels will receive a seven-year, \$47 million contract with a team-record \$15.75 signing bonus, according to the source.

Rabach was a third-round draft pick from Wisconsin by the Ravens in 2001 and became a starter last year. The Redskins want him to strengthen the interior of the offensive line. Lennie Friedman started last season at

center and replaced by Cory Raymer after two games.

The two edges of the line should be in solid shape with Samuels' resigning. The Redskins now have long-term deals with Samuels and right tackle Jon Jansen, who is expected to return in full health after missing last season with a ruptured Achilles' tendon.

The Redskins needed to redo Samuels' contract because he was scheduled to count a whopping \$9.5 million against the salary cap this year, restricting the team's ability to re-sign players and acquire new ones. Samuels' signing — bonus tops the club-record \$15.5 million linebacker LaVar Arrington received in a nine-year, \$68 million contract signed in December 2003.

Samuels was the No. 3 overall draft pick in 2000 from Alabama, where he won the Outland Trophy as college football's top lineman.

He made the Pro Bowl in 2001 and 2002 for a knee injury and loss of confidence caused him to slump in the 2003 season. He rebounded with a solid season last year and has been named by Joe Gibbs as one of the core group of players around which the coach hopes to rebuild the franchise.

Raiders welcome addition of Moss

BY JANIE MCCAULEY

The Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Jerry Porter spent most of his first five NFL seasons playing behind stars Jerry Rice and Tim Brown, patiently waiting for a chance to be the Oakland Raiders' top receiver.

Now Rice and Brown are gone, but Randy Moss is bringing his incredible talents to town — and Porter is thrilled.

Just before Porter finalized his new contract with Oakland last week, his agent told him Moss might be on his way to the Raiders in a trade. Signing the deal suddenly became that much sweeter.

"We became powerful real quick. I love it," Porter said. "That was a great move to get Randy Moss."

The Raiders' acquisition of Moss in a trade with the Minnesota Vikings was expected to be announced Wednesday, when the NFL's free-agency period opened. The swap calls for Oakland to send linebacker Napoleon Harris, No. 7 pick in April's draft and a late-round pick to the Vikings.

"Not taking anything from Napoleon Harris, but to only have him give up a draft pick and a linebacker, linebackers don't score points," Porter said.

Porter knows that having Moss on the field — making acrobatic catches, speeding past defenders and drawing double-teams — will only open up more opportunities for him to shine. The rest of the Raiders feel the same way, envisioning a dangerous long-passing offense to rival the great Oakland teams of years past.

late last season, quarterback Kerry Collins campaigned for the Raiders to re-sign Porter, saying it would be one of the team's most important offseason decisions, but also grabbing Moss was more than he could have hoped for.

"At this point, I put our receiving corps up against anybody's in the league," Collins said Tuesday. "Obviously, the addition



Oakland's offensive players are excited to add receiver Randy Moss (above left), expecting him to make the unit explosive. "Not taking anything from Napoleon Harris, (above right), but ... linebackers don't score points," says Raiders receiver Jerry Porter.

of Randy carries defenses more than any other in the NFL.

"I heard rumors for a couple weeks. You hear things like that all the time. You don't really know until something like that materializes. You don't think a guy like Randy Moss A. would get away from a team and B. would come to your team. I'm getting one of the best receivers in the league and a guy whose track record speaks for itself. He adds an unbelievable dimension for us from a deep-threat standpoint. He's a guy who can do it all."

Moss spent much of last season limited by a hamstring injury and didn't reach

*"At this point,
I put our
receiving corps
up against
anybody's in
the league."*

Kerry Collins
Raiders quarterback

1,000 receiving yards for the first time in his seven-year career. He finished with 49 catches for 767 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Porter led the Raiders with 64 catches for 998 yards and nine touchdowns, falling just short of his first 1,000-yard season. His receptions were a career high, and he scored three touchdowns in a game twice.

The Raiders' second-round draft pick in 2000 out of West Virginia, Porter wanted to be showcased in new coach Norv Turner's offense during his contract year. It eventually happened.

"I can play alongside people and not have a conflict," Porter said. "I'm used to



AP photos

that. As long as Randy can do that, we'll be fine. If he can deal with not getting his 95 balls he's accustomed to getting. I want to win."

Moss' often bizarre behavior has been considered distracting over the years, but Raiders tight end Teyo Johnson isn't concerned.

"Randy Moss is one of the elements, if not the element, for us being a playoff team," Johnson said. "All I care about is winning football games, and Randy Moss can do that. You can put aside all the other things people say about him, people say he has a bad attitude. I don't care. He can play a football and make plays. The guy is the Raiders mystique."

"He can easily step into a leadership role on our squad. He can really feed off the energy Coach Turner has started here."

McCune fit for duty

NFL prospect, Army vet knows difference between football, battle

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — When Robert McCune hears football players talk about going to war, he just shakes his head. Three years of Army service taught him that football is a game, war a battle for survival.

McCune lived on military bases in five states and was deployed to South Korea and Kuwait. He heard the crackle of nearby gunfire and camped on a roof during a monsoon. He spent days refueling military vehicles and free moments lifting a 50-pound rock.

McCune endured it all so he could keep playing football. His Army buddies found that funny.

"I told them that after this I was going to go to college and get my degree. I was going to play football, and they laughed," he said.

Now the linebacker might be close to playing in the NFL. McCune, among the 332 players invited to this year's combine, will be 26 by the time of the April draft, and he might be the oldest player selected.

"If the guy is a real good football player, you don't worry about it," Houston Texans General Manager Charley Casserly said. "If he's in the development stage, it becomes a concern."

McCune wasn't even offered a Division I-A scholarship when he graduated from LeFlore High

School in Mobile, Ala. He had hoped to play in college at Alabama or Auburn, but the only offers came from places like Alabama A&M, Alabama State, Southern University and Grambling.

So McCune joined the Army in 1997.

"My plan was to go into the military, grow up and walk on at some Division I school," he said.

During the next three years, he lived in Fort Lee, Va., Fort Stewart, Ga.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Knox, Ky.; and Fort Irwin, Calif. The training regimen included 4-mile runs, pushups and situps.

When he went to South Korea for one year as a patrolling specialist, McCune improvised. He used his fueling truck rig as a pull-up bar and a heavy rock for weightlifting. Between missions, McCune found just enough time to pull out the sharp-edged rock for a workout.

"I'd sit on top of the truck and do curls over my head until they came," he said. "I was in Korea for 365 days, and I'd say I worked out 340 days."

McCune learned to deal with the odor of raw sewage and poor living conditions, but wasn't prepared for the monsoon season. One night, with his barracks covered in about 7 feet of water, he scrambled onto a roof and spent the night there as lightning lit the sky.

"I didn't think the rain was



Louisville LB Robert McCune (54) breaks up a pass intended for North Carolina's Adarius Bowman (11) on Sept. 25, 2004, at Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill, N.C. McCune, who lived on military bases in five states and was deployed to South Korea and Kuwait, made a team-high 143 tackles for the Cardinals in 2003.

ever going to end," he said. "I was trying to think of a plan of what to do next."

During a six-month tour in Kuwait, McCune and the Americans rarely met the locals. Occasionally, McCune was awakened by gunfire, unsure where the shots came from.

McCune finished his active duty in 2000. When he returned home, he pursued his football dream despite a five-year commitment to the National Guard. Some coaches were wary, knowing he might miss practices.

But he persuaded John L. Smith, then coach of Louisville, to let him play as a walk-on, and he used the G.I. Bill to pay for his first semester. By the second semester, he had earned a scholarship.

In March 2003, he nearly had to leave football again. McCune's Guard unit was alerted that it might be deployed to Iraq. He

was sent to Fort Knox for training, missed part of spring football and worried he might miss part or all of his junior season.

"It was tough because I had been selected captain, and my coaches expected a lot out of me," he said. "They told me not to worry, that my spot would still be there when I got back. I missed about two or three months of school, but everything ended up working out. We weren't called up. It just made me appreciate football that much more."

McCune finished 2003 with a team-high 143 tackles, including four sacks.

This past December, after finishing his Louisville career with 320 tackles, McCune completed his military service with the rank of corporal in part time status preparing for the NFL combine. He also earned a degree in education.

Some scouts wonder if the 6-foot, 245-pound McCune is big

enough to play inside linebacker in the NFL, but no one has questioned his commitment or work ethic.

"You assume he has a character that's very high, and that's very important to all of us," Tennessee coach Jeff Fisher said. "People who not only can avoid off-field problems, but who can be productive like that are very valuable."

McCune will spend the next two months preparing for football, watching the news and getting updates from friends never far from his mind. But you'll never hear McCune making comparisons between the game he loves and the battles he's fought.

"In war, you have real, live bullets flying around," he said.

"My buddies, they have a saying: 'You stay alert, stay alive,' and one of my friends said it's true. I tell them all the time, and they talk to me they hope I make it. I tell them 'I hope I make it, too.'"

Numbers don't tell the whole story at NFL combine

By KEVIN SHERRINGTON
The Dallas Morning News

The last time a national audience saw anything like Maurice Clarett pulling that piano at the NFL combine was in one of those old Superstars competitions, when Joe Frazier nearly drowned in the 50 free.

Clarett ran an unofficial 4.82 in the 40 the other day, then backed it up with a 4.72.

Not bad for a tackle. Unfortunately, Clarett's trying to make a living as a running back, and even a court can't help him anymore.

The combine never was a time to come up lame. As they used to say in high school, this stuff goes on your permanent record.

But now it's even more daunting. The combine is no longer the province of scouts and a few bored NFL writers on holiday.

The world's watching, and athletes have never seemed so naked.

Commentary

Clarett was so embarrassed by the overexposure that he fled the workouts.

Word is he bulked up and didn't use a personal trainer. Whatever.

You're on your own at the combine, anyway.

Your old sports information director can't cover for you anymore.

No one's fooled by media gobs or press releases.

No exaggerated heights or mythic times in Indy. Scouts poke and prod and click and click, and there's no hiding anything.

You'd have a better chance getting through a metal detector with your Swiss Army knife.

The combine is like a job interview, only instead of reading your resumé or calling up your references, they make you take the SAT and post the results.

If NFL types were running the Miss America pageant, they'd dunk Miss New Hampshire in a vat and announce her body fat.

If they were judging the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, they'd take off for miles.

The combine strips all romance from football. There's no glory weighing a guy in his underwear. No one can quantify your guts, only your gut.

Frankly, I'm not certain this is always the best way to go. Sure, it's nice to know that Matt Jones, the former Arkansas quarterback, runs a 4.4, which confirms suspicions that he has a shot as an NFL receiver and explains how he kept turning away from those Texas defenses.

But as fun as it is to learn a player's most intimate details, there's something disconcerting about all this attention on times and measures.

You can get carried away with the numbers. A former University of Houston defensive back

once ran a 4.4 for scouts and was drafted high even though he couldn't play and never did.

Here's how a scout named Bill Groman explained it: The kid was fast in a straight line but couldn't turn and run with a wide receiver, and they don't wait for you.

Groman knew this because he'd seen the kid play. Hard to judge football players in a vacuum. A scout stands behind a linebacker as he runs the 40 and compares it to getting sucked up by a jet on takeoff. What happens? A couple laughter years in the NFL and he's on a jet back home.

Another SWC linebacker from the same area was far less imposing. Too short and too slow, a lethal combination.

Zach Thomas just finished his ninth year in the league with the Dolphins, and the pairing is no coincidence.

"If Zach Thomas had not gone to Miami and played for Jimmy Johnson," said Spike Dykes, who coached Thomas at Texas Tech, "he never would have made it."

Translation: The only numbers that mattered to Jimmy were all the tackles Thomas racked up.

As in real estate, location is everything. Who'd argue that Tom Brady might be one of the best quarterbacks ever if the sixth-rounder hadn't ended up in New England behind Drew Bledsoe? Not that raw data is a bad thing. You can understand why clubs want to gather all the information possible.

You just can't read too much into it. Clarett was so unimpressive, the talk is he might not even be drafted. Then again, he only has to sell one team, and who knows what happens?

"We really don't know how fast he was when he was playing football," Cardinals coach Dennis Green told ESPN.com.

And make no mistake, Clarett was a player once. Whether he still is remains to be seen. He's no sprinter. Joe Frazier wasn't a swimmer, either, but it's not much consolation, looking up at him from the canvas.

SPORTS



Are the best tournament fields
up for bids from corporations?
Page 44

NFL's weighty debate

League dismisses study claiming more than half of players are obese

BY LINDSEY TANNER
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — It's no secret that size matters in the National Football League, but a new study suggests that a whopping 56 percent of NFL players would be considered obese by some medical standards.

The NFL called the study bogus for using players' body-mass index, a height-to-weight ratio that doesn't consider body muscle versus fat. The players union said that despite the familiar sight of bulging football jerseys, there's no proof that obesity is rampant in the league.

But former defensive tackle John Jurkovic said he's seen plenty of evidence that players have gotten not just bigger but sometimes fatter, "big as houses" in recent years because of league pressure to intimidate opponents and win.

"The NFL teams want it because it's working," said Jurkovic, who played for Green Bay, Cleveland and Jacksonville before retiring in 2000.

The theory is that bigger men, especially linemen and defensive players, are better blockers and harder to move.

But the study results suggest

that bigger players don't make a team more successful. There was no relationship between teams' average player BMI and their ranking in 2003-04, the season studied. Arizona had the highest average BMI, but also the worst record in its division.

In the study, University of North Carolina endocrinologist

Joyce Harp and student Lindsay Hecht used statistics on the NFL Web site to calculate BMIs for 2,168 NFL players, nearly all those playing in the 2003-04 season.

Almost all the players qualified as overweight, and 56 percent had BMIs of at least 30 — what doctors consider obese. For example, a 6-foot-2 man weighing 235 has a BMI of just over 30. Nearly half of the obese players were in the severely obese range, with a BMI of at least 35, and a small percentage were morbidly obese with a BMI of at least 40.

Harp acknowledged that without measuring body composition, it's uncertain how

many players were truly fat, but she said it's unlikely the high BMIs were "due to a healthy increase in muscle mass alone."



AP
Former Oklahoma offensive guard Wes Sims runs the 40-yard dash during the NFL combine in Indianapolis on Feb. 26. It's no secret that teams court big, strong players. But are they getting too big for their own good?



AP
Cleveland Browns defensive tackle John Jurkovic signs autographs for fans before practice at Cleveland Browns Stadium on Aug. 17, 1999. Jurkovic, who played for the Browns, Green Bay Packers and Jacksonville Jaguars, said he's seen evidence that players have gotten not just bigger but sometimes fatter.



Jockey Elliott, who won Derby, Preakness aboard Smarty Jones, detained by U.S. immigration

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In danger of missing playoffs for second straight season, Trail Blazers fire coach Cheeks

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NFL free-agent signing period begins; Redskins waste little time making deal with ex-Raven Rabach

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Former soldier not about to liken NFL to warfare Page 47

